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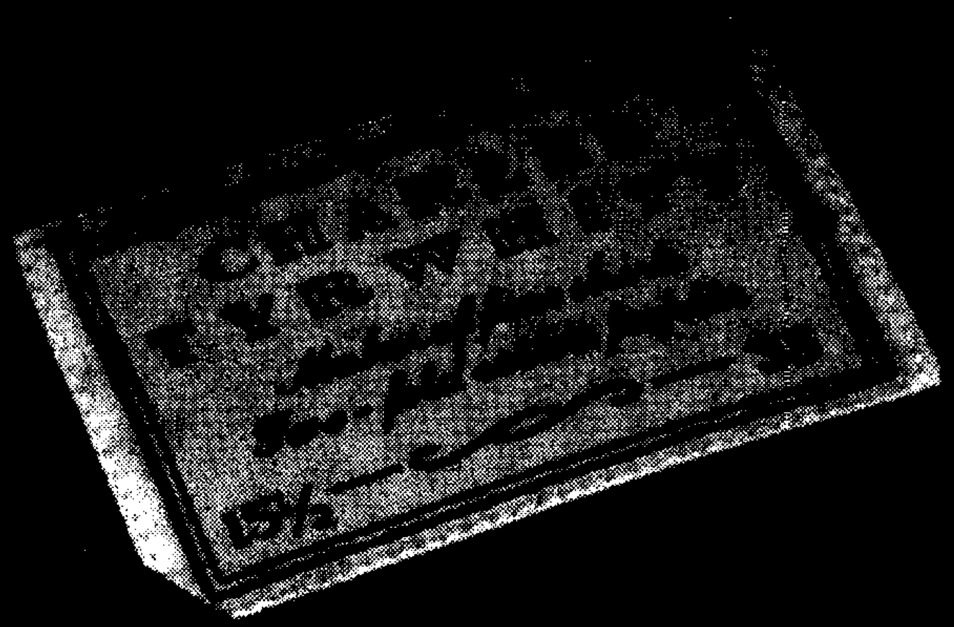

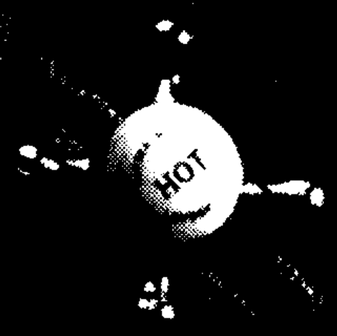

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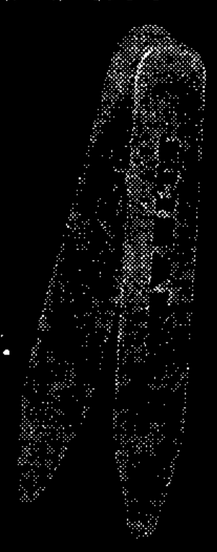

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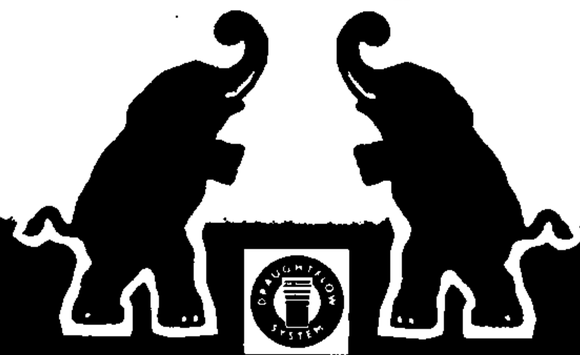

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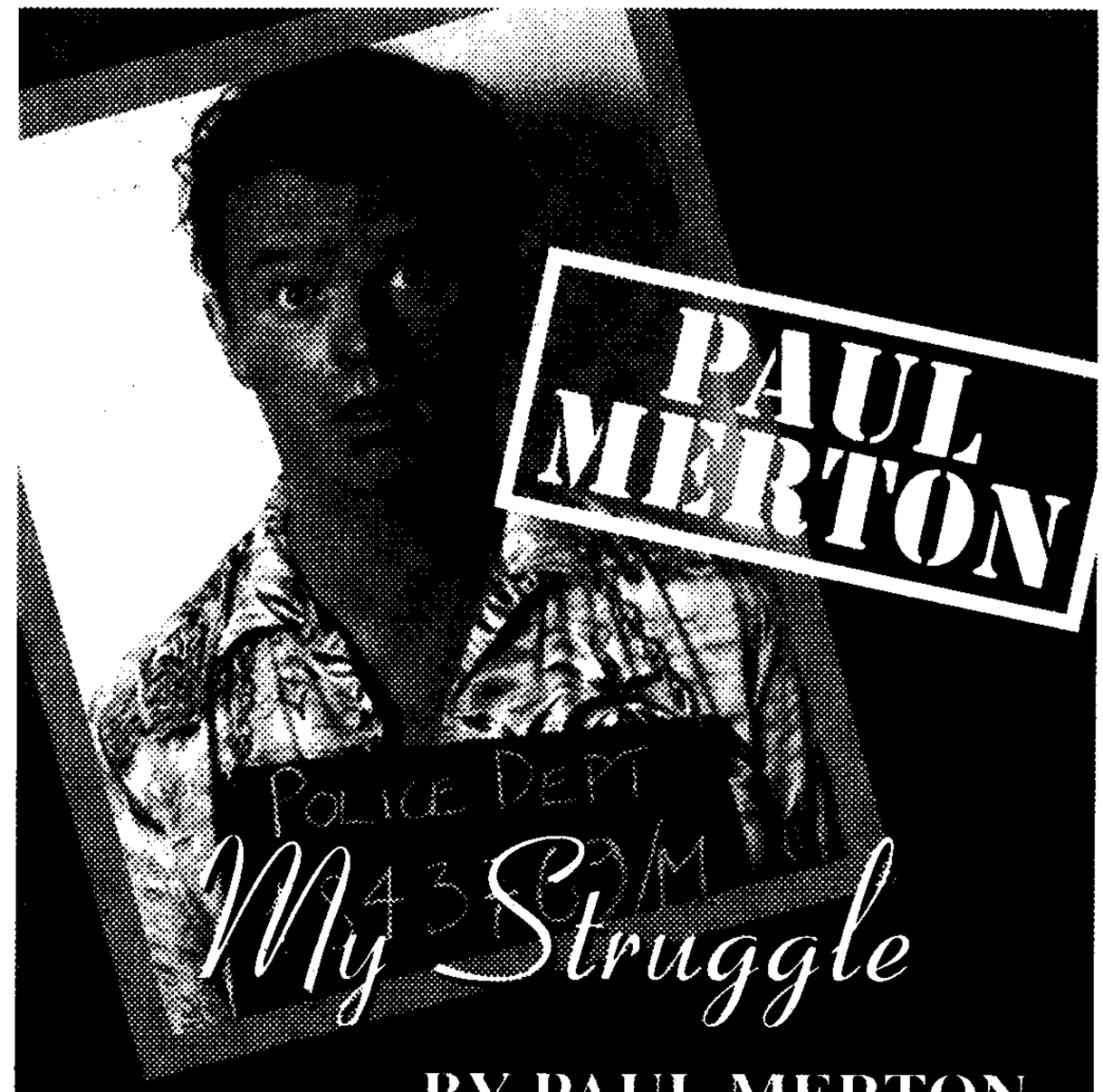

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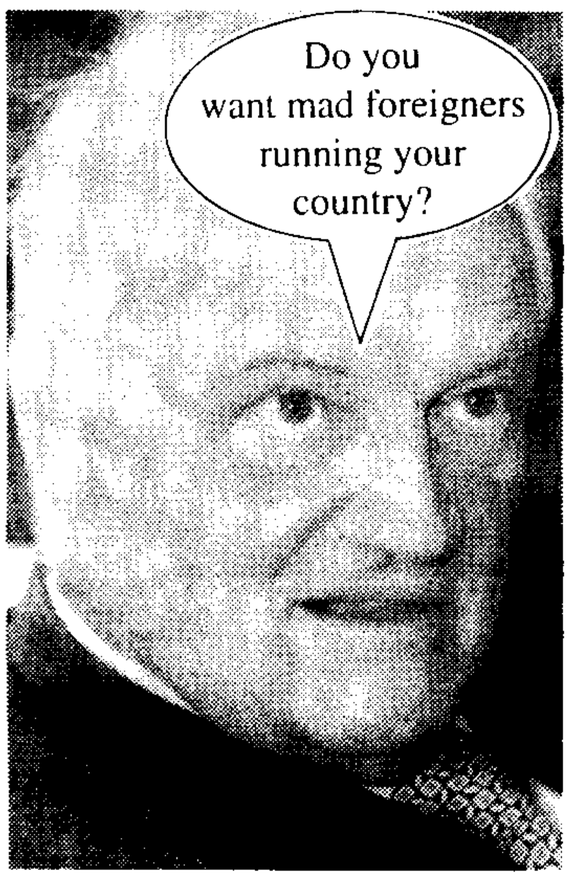
Gnome

LIKE many senior Conservatives I have become increasingly impressed with Sir James Goldsmith and his Referendum Party of Great Britain.

Indeed, so impressed was I by Sir James's anti-Brussels stance that on my recent stay with him in his delightful Mexico home I promised to run one of his advertisements in my own column.

Yesterday I rang him at his Paris base to confirm the arrangement and I am delighted to reproduce his Eurosceptic message here.



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COLOUR SECTION

IN THE TEAROOM

THERE are brown, sticky marks on the tearoom sofa and a number of Tory MPs are beginning to ask: "Who's had their fingers in the Marmite pot?"

The keeper of the little black jar is Sir James Goldsmith MEP, late of Cavenham Foods and distributor of a nutritious blend of pelf and patronage to Eurosceptic causes.

One MP clearly doing well on it is the ridiculously tall Bill Cash, who's grown from being a snotty-nosed constitutional law bore on the backest of backbenches to a figure of national political stature. No one would mind if it weren't for the fact that the billionaire funding his disingenuously named "European Foundation" has his own Referendum party running candidates in the general election against many of Cash's colleagues.

One of these is David Mellor, who may have to fight Sir Jams himself in Putney, where the great financier's own unusual sexual and domestic arrangements (see *Eyes passim*) are unlikely to prove a vote loser.

Another very tall man consorting with the enemy is Jonathan Aitken, who has had Goldsmith to speak at the Conservative Philosophy Group, an exclusive little meeting of minds used by Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s as a springboard for her leadership campaign. Only a little over a year ago it looked as if Aitken too might enter the leadership race, perhaps wearing Sir Jams's colours, and unite the right and centre-right against John Major.

Aitken's PR adviser at the time was ultra-right young star Patrick Robertson, who now works for Goldsmith's Referendum party. But someone must have heard him plotting, because Aitken suddenly found himself dropped in the soup by Michael Heseltine over irregularities at arms company BMARC.

Heseltine's dramatic revelations were followed at once by Major's equally dramatic resignation, and his new election as Tory leader. Aitken was forced to resign and has since spent many months with his libel lawyers. As for Heseltine, he became deputy prime minister. Some say this was all part of a deal to sink Aitken, spite Goldsmith and reelect Major.

'Urquhart'

THE NEWS that Canterbury Mills, "renderers" of Godmersham, near Ashford, Kent, have been selected as one of the five firms licensed to handle cattle slaughtered in the latest cull has been greeted with horror by almost everyone in the area except Ashford district council and the two local MPs, Julian Brazier and Sir Keith Speed.

Ashford council has consistently refused to bow to demands for further controls on the firm from neighbouring householders overcome by the appalling stench. The Cheale family, which runs the renderers, was therefore optimistic about its recent planning application to dispose of effluent from the plant by tipping it into local fields. Unhappily for the family, the fields fall in the area of Canterbury city council, which is much less amenable to the renderers.

On 21 May, for instance, the city council's planning committee gave an audience to Alan Colchester, a consultant neuro-surgeon at Guy's and the William Harvey hospital at Ashford, who has been dealing with the three recent cases of the killer disease CJD. In his statement to the committee, Mr Colchester said that the liquid effluent resulting from the cooking of animal remains in the factory "could potentially be a potent route for the transmission of prions, the infectious agents causing scrapie in sheep, BSE in cattle and CJD in man, to farm animals, wild animals, domestic pets and man". To give planning permission in these circumstances, he said, would be a "grave error".

Stunned, the committee deferred a decision to its June meeting, which is expected to refuse planning permission. This will be a blow to the rendering firm, to its supporters at Ashford and to the two local MPs. Questions in the House of Commons about the factory have been asked by David Hinchliffe, a Labour MP from Wakefield, 200 miles away.

PS: In June last year Canterbury Mills was convicted of breaking sewage and effluent regulations and fined £10,000.

THE BBC's contract with Lowe Bell, the public relations firm of Margaret Thatcher's favourite PR-man Sir Tim Bell, is at an end.

A BBC spokeswoman told the *Eye* the contract was discontinued in April. She explained there was "a possible conflict of interest" between Sir Tim's job at the BBC and his new post as PR adviser to Sky TV. "They might be able to pay him more than we can," she added, helpfully.

Eye readers will recall Lowe Bell's involvement in a number of cases where Lowe Bell clients were under criticism from the BBC. For instance, Lowe Bell represented British Airways in BA's determined opposition to BBC2's *Newsnight* coverage of the John Gorman story (see Footnotes for latest instalment). So powerful was Lowe Bell's intervention that *Newsnight*'s follow-up to its first programme on the affair has been postponed and postponed again for many months.

Then there was BBC1's *Panorama* programme on the lottery, which was critical of G-Tech, the American lottery company which owns a fifth of Camelot, the British lottery operator. The *Panorama* programme, too, was delayed while energetic discussions took place between *Panorama* editors and G-Tech's PR advisers in Britain, Lowe Bell.

During both controversies Lowe Bell was under contract to the BBC. There was apparently no problem for anyone involved with any possible conflict of interest.

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"Only gelatin, tallow and bull semen are permitted to jump over the moon."

Street of Shame

POOR Tracy Shaw. The amazing young actress who has made hairdresser Maxine one of the most believable characters in *Coronation Street* was viciously done over by the *News of the Screws* two weeks ago.

The *Screws* could not contain its excitement at Tracy's "frantic cocaine-and-sex session with two-timing telly host Glenn Williams".

Normally such grotesque coverage would lead to an automatic follow-up in the next day's *Sun*. But not this time. Stacked in the paper's printing plants were four million *Coronation Street* scratch-cards featuring a large colour photo of... Tracy Shaw, ready for distribution with Monday's edition. The *Sun* was therefore left to make the best of things, dropping Tracy's name from its promotional copy but using her photo to promote the scratch-card — which, ironically, is cofinanced by the *NoW*.

Incidentally, the *Screws* hack who exposed Tracy's "cocaine romp", Ian Edmondson, has since been unceremoniously ditched by his girlfriend, *Mirror* showbiz writer Sasha Jensen. And no wonder: it was Sasha Jensen from whom Edmondson wheedled the story in the first place.

Jensen had spent a few days with Tracy after she won the coveted, er, 1996 Rear of the Year award; and it was Jensen who witnessed the "cocaine romp". Unfortunately she told her boyfriend, Edmondson; and the next time the pair met for dinner he asked her all about the evening over again, questioning her persistently over every detail. When they drove away from the restaurant, he then pointed out a man whom he told Jensen was a *Screws* photographer. He also told her that he had taped their entire conversation.

Edmondson, the charmer, insisted that if his girlfriend did not sign an affidavit confirming the cocaine session in the hotel and Tracy's departure with the TV presenter she, Jensen, would be included in the *Screws* story along with her photo. Terrified, Jensen agreed. Thus the "friend who witnessed the drug-taking" was in fact the aggrieved *Mirror* hackette.

Not surprisingly she had a tabloid-style slap round the face waiting for Edmondson after she was forced to sign the affidavit. She has now resigned from her showbiz post. "Love-rat" Edmondson meanwhile remains comfortably ensconced with the other sleazebags at the *Screws*.

IN APRIL last year *Independent* hackette Ruth Picardie wrote an angry column about the police search for the killer of nine-year-old Daniel Handley, who had been found buried in a shallow grave near Bristol.

"Police imaginations," she fumed, "appear to have gone into overdrive. 'I have made appeals to the paedophile community asking for help,' said a police spokesperson... Why are the police so obsessed with the paedophile connection?"

According to Picardie, the mundane business of crime detection was frustrating and dull, and "so the police have to sexy things up with 'paedophile gang' fantasies". As long as they persisted in looking for paedophiles, "who knows for how many years Daniel's killer — ordinary, unexceptional, without the rolling eyes of a demented paedophile — will roam free".

Well, not *that* many years, actually. Last month the killers of Daniel Handley were jailed for life. Timothy Morss and Brett Tyler were both demented paedophiles who had toured the streets of east London looking for a small boy on whom they could act out their ultimate fantasy — abducting him, raping him in front of a video camera, and then murdering him.

Strangely, Ruth Picardie has not yet seen fit to comment on the case.

IN A clod-hopping, Clouseau-like attempt to embarrass the Tory party, the *Daily Mirror* dispatched two of its bovine reporters to Oxford in pursuit of home secretary Michael Howard's student son.

The paper had been tipped off, wrongly, that the Howard sprog had collapsed after overdosing on drugs. The blundering hacks gained illegal entry to St Catherine's College, and at 7am battered upon the door of Master Nick Howard — who, being an upright citizen and completely blameless, quite rightly slammed the door in their red faces.

This will of course deeply embarrass chief executive of Mirror Group, Mr David Montgomery, who strongly disapproves of such invasions of privacy. In fact he has recently instructed his lawyers to send out a letter threatening newspapers with actions for breaching his own privacy. He must obviously disapprove of hacks trying to find out unwelcome details about the children of influential public figures. Otherwise he would be a grotesque hypocrite.

BRITAIN's foremost liberal daily newspaper, the *Grauniad*, is always quick to condemn other companies for their aggressive hire-and-fire policies. But what of the *Grauniad*'s own conduct as an employer?

In February the IRA ended its ceasefire by blowing up several buildings on the Isle of Dogs, including the so-called "Guardian Press Centre" where the paper was printed. An arrangement was then made with West Ferry Printers to use its presses until the *Grauniad*'s machinery was up and running again.

After the bomb, staff at the Press Centre sacrificed their holidays and days off to repair the damage. By April, thanks to their efforts, all three presses were back on line and normal production resumed.

But then, without warning, the managing director of the Guardian Press Centre, Fiona Morris, abruptly informed staff that a permanent contract had been signed with West Ferry Printers and that the *Guardian*'s printing works would close in August. The reason given was that the papers could charge higher advertising rates because West Ferry offered better quality colour printing. And so more than 200 loyal employees are to be thrown on the scrapheap to improve profit margins, without any consultation or offer of alternative employment at the West Ferry plant.

AS predicted in *Eye* 892, the arrival of dour Lord Hollick at Express Newspapers has led to a crackdown on the hard-drinking habits of hacks at the Grey Lubyanka.

The first victim is the 6th floor dining-hall, the aptly-named River Room, where vast rivers of expensive wine flow down the throats of editors and their cronies. Wandering past the room at 4.30pm one afternoon, Hollick was surprised to notice what appeared to be a riotous party still in full swing. "Who are those people?" he inquired. "Er, they're senior editorial executives, sir," the manageress explained. "Having lunch."

Punishment was swift. Hollick's equally puritanical new chief executive, Stephen Grabiner, sent out a memo last week ordering the immediate closure of the River Room.

While crestfallen hacks — particularly those on the booze-fuelled *Daily Star* — were still absorbing this shocking news, they noticed another announcement: "On a housekeeping matter, I do not believe it is appropriate for a modern media company to encourage and sanction staff to drink during working hours and I have, therefore, closed Poppins."

Poppins — the notorious in-house bar on the ground floor, scene of many glass-in-face fights and tremendous debauchery — was set up by the previous regime so staff could be located at a moment's notice, instead of having to ring round every pub and wine-bar in the vicinity. Selling heavily-subsidised booze, it was not meant to make money. However, such was the hacks' insatiable thirst it became one of the few departments in Express Newspapers to turn in a profit — more than £90,000 last year alone. On the day Poppins closed last week, the landlord of the nearest pub, Doggetts Coat and Badge, revealed that his evening takings had instantly gone up by £800.

To get to and from these local hostelries, of course, *Daily Star* hacks are obliged to cross the busy and dangerous Blackfriars Road. Given their difficulty in focusing clearly, let alone walking in a straight line, many will probably meet an early death under the wheels of passing juggernauts — thereby saving Hollick and Grabiner the trouble of sacking them.

CHANNEL 4 has been broadcasting a series by new *Observer* editor Will Hutton on the appalling state of Tory Britain.

To quote from the summary in his own newspaper's TV preview: "The members of the workforce interviewed talk of insecurity, fear of unemployment, of not being able to plan for the future. You sit there nodding in agreement."

This cannot, surely, be a reference to the "insecurity" caused at the *Observer* by Hutton's own mass sackings?

FOOTBALL NEWS

FRESH from their triumphant coverage of the England-China match ("A chink in the defence", etc), football writers' knowledge of Europe has been stretched to the very limit by Euro 96.

The *Mail*'s Brian Scovell began his research early, revealing that: "Flamboyance is not a quality you would associate with the Czechs. Their small country in the middle of Europe has been overrun many times and it has left them with a serious approach to life" (May 29).

Over at the *Mail on Sunday*, meanwhile, Ian Archer discovered that Switzerland is "a country best-liked for its ability to make cuckoo clocks". While at the *Mirror*, hacks were prepared to stick their necks out and make predictions. Germany would play, for example, "with trademark teutonic efficiency" (June 4).

At the *Sunday Mirror*, Neal Collins revealed: "Bulldog spirit alone has carried England successfully through a world cup before — not to mention the odd blitz and all sorts of wars."

And here's a star turn from a guest writer, this time in *The Observer* (2 June): "Over the next three weeks we will see the flair of the Latin countries" and "Germany's efficiency". The guest writer's name? Tony Blair, a man who really knows his Europe.

HOW does a desperate football hack land an interview with an elusive England player during Euro 96?

Well, writers spurned by clubs can always try the Professional Footballers Association (PFA), which acts as agent for some players during transfers. The drawback is that the PFA requires copy approval.

One hack who approached the PFA presumed such an arrangement would be impossible, especially on the free-thinking broadsheets, but was amazed by the PFA's response. Oh no, it said. At the *Daily Telegraph*, for example, football writer Henry Winter was apparently quite happy to get approval for his interviews from the PFA in return for access to its players.

Winter also seems to have a rapport with players signed to the big boot companies, Reebok and adidas. He is good at getting interviews with these players — and at mentioning what kind of boot they wear. Hence "Stubbs, the emerging artist in adidas"; or at the Liverpool training ground: "a training session organised by Liverpool's sponsors, adidas"; or in an interview with Paul Ince: "taking time out from promoting his new adidas boot"; or on Gazza: "the legs that rise from his new adidas have grown".

But it's not just adidas Winter is fond of mentioning. "Giggs was attended... by representatives from his boot sponsors Reebok... to promote his new state-of-the-art 'Sidewinder' boot".

HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! THE loot involved in the Duchess of Freebiana's book deal has not been lost on the Princess of Wales. The gels lunched together before flying to different bits of the United States for self-promotion tours and both had plenty to talk about.

By coincidence the toughest sticking point in the Wales's divorce is Diana's insistence that Brian also sign a "confidentiality" clause. The little minx is well aware that Brian is thick enough to continue insisting "his word" is sufficient to ensure he will never reveal any marital secrets — other than those shared with Jonathan Dimbleby and millions and millions of private, er, TV viewers, that is. This will allow Diana to claim the same rights, leaving her free — at a later, more lucrative stage — to sign the mother of all book deals.

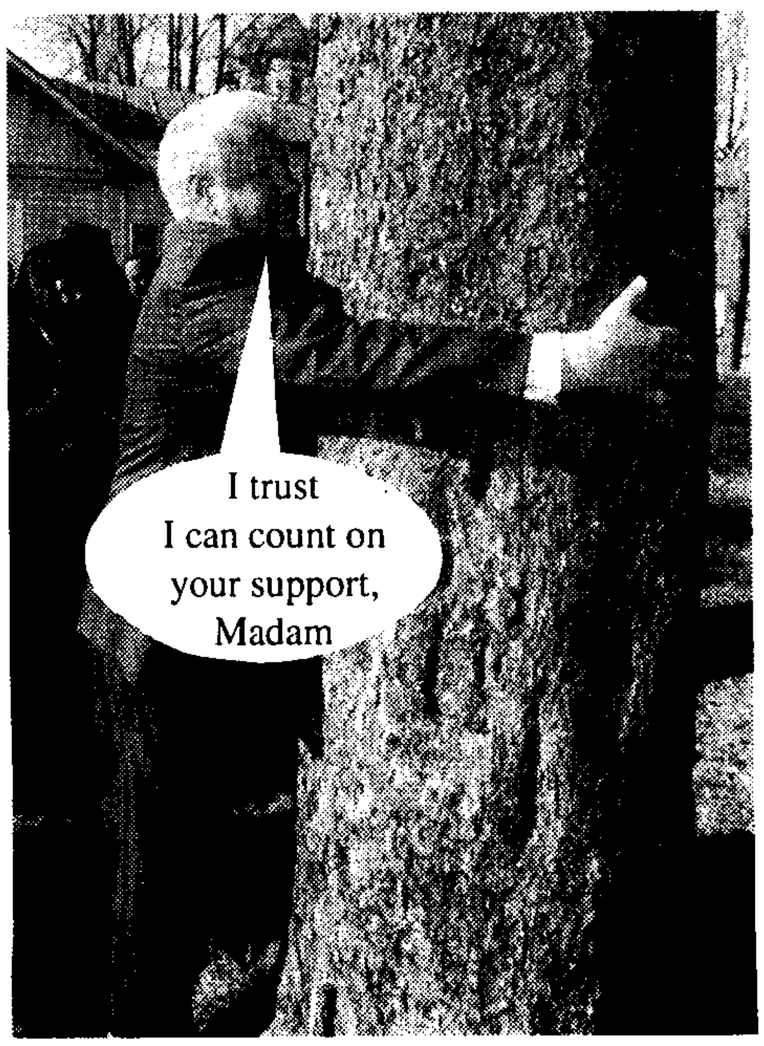
Meanwhile Fergiana's promised discretion has a fine family history. When her father, Major Ronald Ferguson, penned his absurd and indiscreet autobiography *The Galloping Major*, I rang to discuss his saucy revelations. "I never," he bellowed, "discuss my private life!"

HALLO! *WILL the agony never end for James Hewitt, who has now been sent to Coventry by the yokels in his Devon village?*

Not that the villagers of Bratton Clovelly give a toss about "Major" Hewitt's latest TV gushings about Diana ("One wanted to serve, etc."). No, the local bumpkins are angry about a lake the moron Hewitt has dug in his grounds. Not only did Hewitt fail to obtain planning permission, but his artificial lake threatens to flood adjoining farms.

The result? Only one person in the neighbourhood will entertain him: former defence minister and fellow philanderer, Alan Clark.

RUSSIAN ELECTION SHOCK



HALLO! **TO the law courts for the elevation of Thomas Bingham to the post of lord chief justice. One has to admit one is completely baffled why he is hailed as "liberal".**

Bingers is just as likely as his predecessor, Lord Taylor, to create problems for the home secretary. Indeed, in one of his last performances as master of the rolls he gave every appearance of being a petulant old buffer in a silly wig — and one who was intent on saving Michael Howard's blushes, to boot.

Lifer John Hirst was appealing for a judicial review against the decision on his category status by the home secretary and his parole board. Bingers seemed in filthy mood when Group 4 brought the prisoner to court half an hour late, and constantly interrupted irascibly as Hirst conducted his own appeal.

"Your Honour, I'm trying to point out that one of the parole board members fell asleep during my hearing," insisted the prisoner desperately at one point.

"Yes, yes," replied Lord Justice Bingham, testily. "But *where* does that get us?"

To the job of lord chief justice, of course!

HALLO! *MY LOVABLE chum Michael Winner lunched with his "old" friend O.J. Simpson — neither of whom has killed their wives — when the popular American football star visited Britain recently.*

Ringmaster Max Clifford was keen to tell the world that his client had "a lot" of libel cases waiting to roll in the United States, against newspapers who had, rashly, predicted his guilt.

Winner can only hope Simpson's litigation stops on that side of the Atlantic. Or perhaps it was another rotund director of similar name who said in his News of the World column nine months ago: "I have to think, without a doubt, O.J. Simpson did indeed knife to death his estranged wife Nicole."

HALLO! EARL "Fetlocks" Carnarvon, the Queen's racing manager, is at last catching up with the 1990s. Though ITV's *Network First* broadcast his valiant efforts to make his stately pile Highclere earn an honest million or two, the strapped for cash Lord C can still get his exes for attending the House of Lords.

Indeed, on 25 January he raised the matter of the widening of the A34: "Is the minister aware of the crucial significance of this road to the ports of Southampton, Newhaven and Portsmouth?" Evidently worn out by baking scones for the plebs, poor "Fetlocks" quite forgot to mention that the A34 is also one of the main routes used by the army of vulgarians who drive to Highclere every summer to top up his millions.

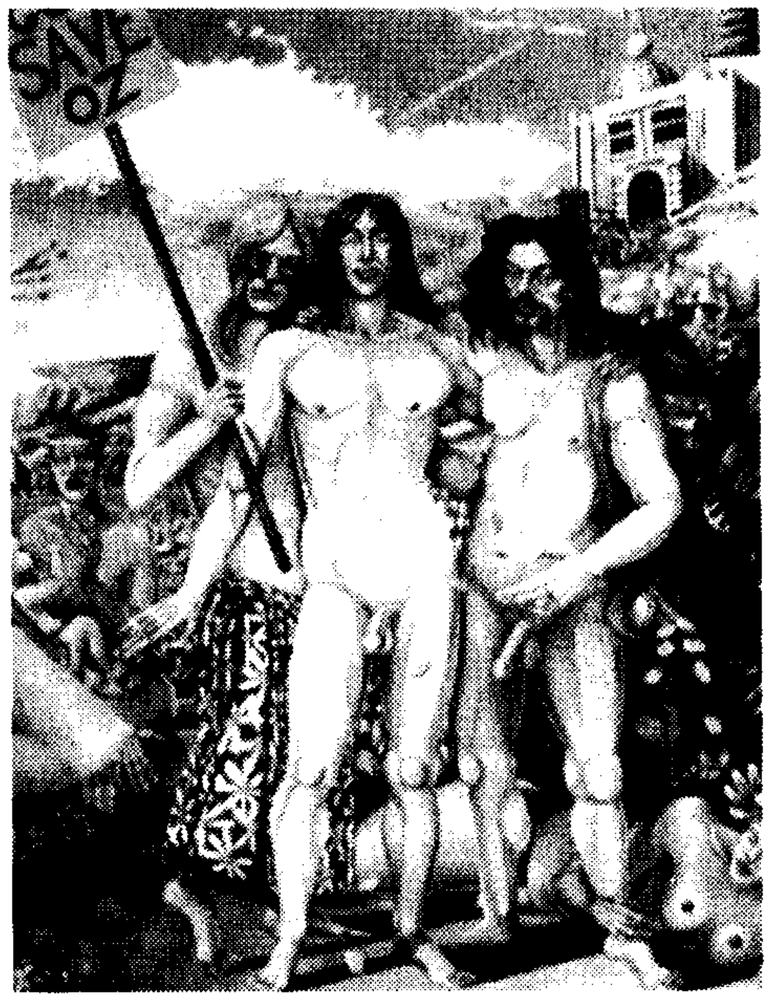
Consequently he omitted to declare any interest whatsoever!

Anglo Beef Processors Ltd, Blisworth. Quality fresh and frozen beef.

Queen's Award for Export Achievement 1996

HALLO! **WHAT does the future hold for Prince Edward's ex-girlfriend, the fun-loving Countess of Woolton, now she has left her job at the M&C Saatchi advertising agency?**

Reticent young thing that she is, Sophie Woolton isn't saying. But when she does decide to break her silence I trust she will give an interview to the *Daily Mirror*. David Montgomery, the paper's chief executive, has a high opinion of her talents and will undoubtedly ensure his rag treats her with the respect that is her due.



HALLO! I AM hugely impressed by the new oil painting of Richard Neville, Jim Anderson and Felix Dennis, the three ex-hippies who, older readers will recall, edited the obscene *Oz* magazine in the 60s and were jailed for their trouble.

The painting by Caroline Coon shows the naked trio outside an idealised Old Bailey, and it is a massive work in every sense: particularly where Felix Dennis's genitals are concerned.

Of the three, Dennis received the shortest sentence — nine months — because the judge said he was younger and "very much less intelligent" than the others. But he went on to become a hugely rich magazine publisher, and his wealth has now allowed him to enlarge his part in history (*Geddit?*).

When commissioning Coon, his one stipulation was that his own genitals had to be not twice, but *three* times bigger than those of Neville. Readers will have to examine the painting themselves to see how strictly Coon stuck to her briefs (*'brief', shurely?*)

BRITISH actor HUGE GRANT and his girlfriend actress/model ELIZABETH HURLEY pose for photographers outside the Majestic Hotel in Cannes,

Johannesburg Citizen

HALLO! **DURING last week's exciting *Night of 100 Dinners*, the Marquesa was unable to decide which inspiring repast to attend.**

Among dozens of choices there was "magic and music in Belgravia" with Mr and Mrs Bruce Forsyth, hosted by Dame Barbara Cartland *chez elle* in Hertfordshire, or another bash at the Diverso in Piccadilly with Mrs Ivana Trump, who had flown in specially from New York.

However, an urgent announcement arrived from the organisers of this latter do, the Academia Italiana, regarding the correct way of addressing Ivana. She should now be referred to by her new married name of "Ivana Trump Mazzucchelli".

Donald, I gather, has let it be known he is thoroughly dischuffed that his ex-wife is still trading under the Trump name. By chance, he was in London last week at Claridge's with his new wife, Maria. To avoid any unpleasantness, and unable to choose between such glittering parties, the Marquesa stayed home with a TV dinner.

'The Marquesa'

WHEN ex-Tory MP Alan Howarth jumped ship last year, few imagined he had done so before securing the promise of a safe Labour seat. But all efforts to find him one have foundered.

First "new" Labour's high command tried him on the remote Yorkshire seat of Wentworth, but that collapsed when the local horny-handed comrades rose up in a modern day peasants' revolt.

The search then shifted south to Tooting, where the MP Tom Cox is sufficiently old, "old" Labour to be booted upstairs to the Lords without too much fuss. But there was some kind of fuss and the trail went cold until the *South Wales Echo* claimed to have uncovered a scheme to parachute Howarth into Ogmore, currently represented by ailing Labour whip Ray Powell.

Now the valleys are alive to another rumour: that Howarth is the leadership choice for marginal Gower. Suspicious lefties, who can sniff both a plot and a Tory at 20 paces, are convinced Howarth's name is being trailblazed across the country only in order to put them off the scent.

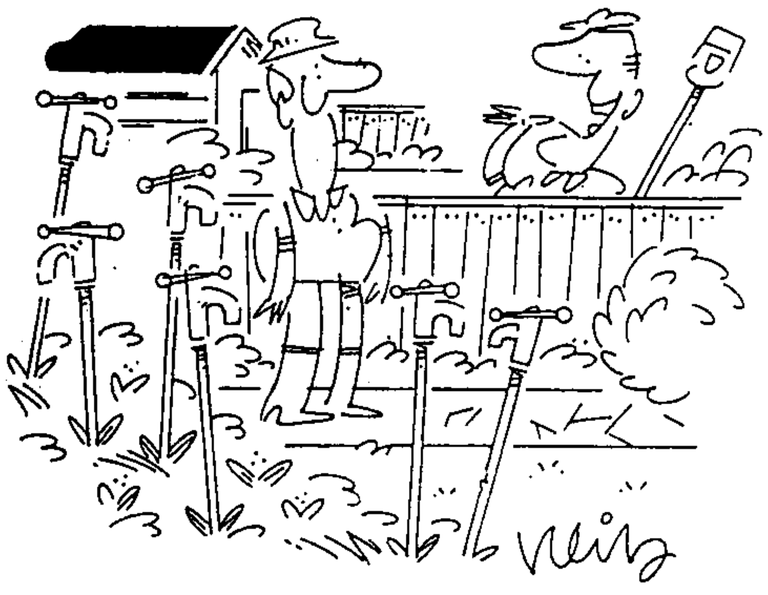
The other leadership luvvie Patricia Hewitt has also failed to make it off the starting bloc as replacement for the litigious Greville Janner in Leicester West, having only been shortlisted in one city ward. Her opponent Willie Bach has two nominations already.

THE Labour party has had a narrow escape in the high court where the capitulation of the *Financial Times* in a libel action has spared Walworth Road the embarrassment of having to shine a light on its selection procedures.

The *FT* has paid costs and undisclosed damages to "Lefty" Liz Davies, Islington councillor and disbarred Leeds North East parliamentary candidate, following its coverage of Labour's kangaroo court proceedings against her last year (see *Eyes passim*). The paper printed comments made at a press conference by the party's then general secretary Tom Sawyer, who alleged that there was "evidence" Lefty Liz had "incited violence" at a council meeting.

The "evidence" came in submissions to the party's star chamber by three of Davies's fellow councillors: Phil Kelly, James Parnell and Tal Michael. Their claims effectively put paid to Davies's chances of standing for Labour in Leeds, and are the subject of a separate libel claim from Davies.

"New" Labour is unlikely to escape so lightly in Davies's case against her three fellow councillors, however. Her supporters have always claimed the campaign against her was orchestrated by Islington chief whip and Blair insider Steven Twigg, and inspired by the leader's office itself. The airing of such claims in court, coming after the selection fiascos in Swindon and Exeter, and possibly around the time of a general election, is not an inviting prospect. Will pressure be put on the three to settle their case quietly, too? Watch this space.



"Your standpipes have come up well this year."

ELECTRICITY regulator Stephen Littlechild has been officially recognised as the industry's loose cannon.

Told by trade secretary Ian Lang not to do or say anything that might disturb the share price of British (nuclear) Energy — a fact recorded in the prospectus from Barclays de Zoete Wedd, "global co-ordinators" for the privatisation — within 24 hours the irrepressible professor had spoken and £100 million was wiped off the value of the company.

This was small beer: Littlechild previously advised Lang to block two mergers, and when Lang followed his advice £1 billion was wiped off share values.

His latest intervention has been to impose a cut of 6 per cent on electricity prices to major electricity-users in Scotland, arousing fury from the two Scottish generating companies. It has been matched by gas regulator Clare Spottiswoode who has continued her intervention over gas prices to the accompaniment of screams of pain from British Gas shareholders.

As we said in *Eye* 899, no one should think these moves are pre-election sweeteners because the regulators are independent.

It is all happening at a time when Lang is hoping to sell off the newer nuclear power stations on the basis of a simple bookkeeping trick invented by the treasury. The liabilities it will inherit — the anticipated costs of shutting down, dismantling and disposing of its power stations, and getting rid of its nuclear waste, total £21 billion — which are too much to ask the private sector to bear. So the treasury has reduced the figure by £7 billion to £14 billion.

The transformation is achieved by changing the notional "discount rate" — the rate at which decommissioning costs are reduced over the years — and instead of applying a rate of 2 per cent, which is standard for the nuclear industry, it has raised the rate to 3 per cent. This, in accountancy terms, does the trick.

Anyone buying shares should remember the advice of John (now Lord) Wakeham when he privatised electricity: buy the shares but flog 'em quick.

WHILE reports in the *Daily Mirror* on the recent rape trial of Owen Oyston were reluctant to describe him as "socialist millionaire", Oyston received moral support throughout from Louise Ellman, who will be the Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside after the election.

Ellman, vice-chair of Lancashire Enterprises plc, of which Oyston held 2.5 million shares (*Eye* 877), burst into tears in the public gallery when the jury returned its guilty verdict.

She also knew Oyston from working on several business projects with him in her capacity as leader of Lancashire county council. But having been selected as a parliamentary candidate from an all-wimmin shortlist — and having put wimmin's rights firmly on her agenda — Oyston's conviction for the rape of a then 16-year-old was a devastating blow. Like many observers Ellman thought Oyston would be acquitted, but his conviction calls into question anyone espousing *both* friendship for Oyston *and* feminist credentials.

PROSPECTIVE Tory MP John Kennedy has enjoyed much media attention since allegations emerged that he acted as a go-between for Serb donations to the Tory party.

His links with Yugoslav royalty have been delved into, his post as private secretary to Prince Michael of Kent has been pored over. But one area missed completely is his time as self-styled car correspondent for *The City of London News*.

The now-defunct paper was owned by Dennis Delderfield, who refuses point-blank to comment on Kennedy's time at the paper. Delderfield is leader of the New Britain party, which in 1977 called for a stop to "coloured immigration to this country". Now the party has more moderate aims of encouraging "people to take a pride in their country".

Another political link Kennedy gained from his time at the paper was with a fellow hack called Andrew Smith, better known as A.V.R. Smith, former director of the loony rightwing group Western Goals. In Smith's own words the organisation believed: "British nations and kindred peoples around the world i.e. all those of Anglo-Celtic-Saxon descent, are the direct lineal descendants of the Ten 'Lost' Tribes of Israel".

So why did Kennedy leave his post at the newspaper when it gave him access to such "illustrious" political figures? Delderfield has only admitted that he asked him to leave. Perhaps it had something to do with Kennedy's fondness for test driving expensive cars as the paper's "motoring correspondent". A hobby which culminated in him arriving at a Tory party conference in a top-of-the range Jaguar which he promptly crashed.

WHY is computer company EDS winning so many government contracts?

A recent Commons question revealed that it had won six major contracts since 1991 worth more than £1,731 million. Yet this is the company that was awarded the child support agency (CSA) contract where problems with the EDS computer system have contributed to a backlog of 350,000 cases, incorrect assessments and much political embarrassment. Despite this EDS never had any penalties applied to it by the government.

Only two companies were invited to tender for the CSA contract: EDS (owned by General Motors) and Lockheed (owned by, er, General Motors). Evidently free market principles were adhered to.

Texas-based EDS was awarded the contract after it offered a "proven" child support system based on a social services package it had delivered to Florida. Florida later refused to pay EDS after the contract price doubled because the system did not "operate as envisaged".

Now EDS staff are working overtime to try to complete a £200 million computer project for the Inland Revenue. Its goal, to support self-assessment, was the biggest tax reform since the 1950s, but a series of technical setbacks have left the project behind schedule. The savings promised to parliament by the £1.26 billion privatisation of the Inland Revenue's computer systems are now being downgraded by 10 percent because of the delays.

So how does EDS hang on it there? Could it possibly be the lingering influence of Margaret Thatcher? After all, EDS was founded by Ross Perot, the former US presidential candidate and strong Thatcher supporter.

Or perhaps the hard work of two Tory MPs who declared EDS among their interests last year simply paid off: Nirj Deva (Brentford and Isleworth) and Michael Stephen (Shoreham) were parliamentary advisers in 1995 and Stephen remains in EDS's pay.

Whatever the answer, computer experts who have watched the catalogue of disasters were amazed to hear that the British army's warehousing and supply lines will now be run by computers managed by... EDS, which won a juicy £40 million contract.

FOR years the British-Iran committee in the Commons (Peter Temple-Morris, Tory, Leominster; David Atkinson, Tory, Bournemouth East; and Bob Parry, Lab, Liverpool Riverside) has been urging the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to sponsor an official visit of British MPs to Iran.

This has been reluctantly rejected by the British section of the IPU, which is not normally too squeamish about the definition of parliaments in countries deemed suitable for British MPs' freebies.

The pretence that the Iranian Majlis has any remote claim to be a democratic assembly was considered a little over the top. There was also the disturbing problem of the large numbers of Iranian dissidents in prison without trial.

Now, however, the friends of Iran have achieved the next-best thing: a visit from British members of the European parliament, past and present. Lord Bethell, (Tory, North East London, until 1994); Edward Macmillan-Scott (Tory, North Yorkshire) and Bryan Cassidy (Tory, Dorset and East Devon) were flying to Tehran on 13 June for a four-day visit during which they were expected to sample the full extent of legendary Iranian hospitality.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE Railway Inn in Pontlottyn, Glamorgan, is quaint, extraordinary and precious. It is built *inside* the arch of a railway viaduct. This was done in 1867 in the days when Pontlottyn, aka Gomorrah, was black with ironworks and coal mines. The wretched people who worked in this hell were even denied the consolation of a drink as the local landowner, the Williams Maesyrhyddid family, were Temperance and refused permission for pubs to be built — only chapels.

But Gwynne Bach came up with an inspired solution: building a pub on railway land underneath the new viaduct of the Rhymney Railway: a triumph of the human spirit.

The Railway Inn is now leased by Whitbread from Railtrack. In 1990 the brewer cited the uniqueness of the inn in its application for a licence renewal and told Rhymney Valley district council it would restore it as a contribution to the "Valleys Initiative". But Whitbread closed the Railway Inn instead and allowed it to deteriorate. Both Whitbread and Railtrack now argue that the inn is too dilapidated to survive.

Unfortunately the Railway Inn is not listed, despite its extraordinary history and its curious construction with lattice girders. Fortunately, however, CADW (Welsh Heritage) decided to list the railway viaduct instead, so when Whitbread applied to demolish the inn in 1995 it was pointed out to the council that the building was in the curtilage of a listed building, so consent could be refused.

So why is this old, powerful and wealthy brewer so keen to demolish this rare and interesting pub? The Railway Inn is now famous and immensely popular locally, and another brewer, the Crown Buckley Brewery, is keen to acquire the lease and restore and reopen it. It would surely be in Railtrack's interest to have a flourishing pub on its land rather than a cleared site, but Railtrack seems to do what Whitbread says, and the brewer has spent money on refurbishing and promoting another pub nearby called the Blast Furnace. If the Railway Inn were to reopen, trade at the Blast Furnace would suffer. Such is the operation of market forces in the Principality of Wales — acting, as Mrs Thatcher and John Redwood always assured us, always in the public interest.

SIR Neil Westbrook (Oundle and Clare College, Cambridge; former lord mayor of Manchester; farmer and property developer), is apparently proud that his family has lived in the Irlams 0'Th'Height area of Salford for more than two centuries — or so letters sent by his agents to residents suggest.

This is presumably why he did his best to redevelop the whole area in the 1970s, a campaign known, for some reason, as the Height Triangle Scandal. Now, to demonstrate his continuing commitment, he, or his company Agecroft Investment, would like to clear away some derelict cottages in Queen Street and King Street and replace them by nice new blocks of flats and car parks.

Having been refused planning permission by Salford city council, Westbrook's appeal goes to public inquiry later this month and, to help matters along, his agents have thoughtfully enclosed a letter for his tenants to sign to save them the trouble of writing themselves:

"I am in favour of building new homes in King Street and Queen Street. The empty site next to 22 King Street is a mess and the buildings at 27 and 29 Queen Street are boarded up. 22 King Street is bricked up. I agree, these three buildings should be knocked down and new dwellings built on the land. New developments like this will certainly improve the appearance of Irlams O'Th'Height." And it would obviously be irrelevant to mention that the mess and dereliction are entirely due to the Agecroft Investment Co. Ltd.

These cottages are in fact old weavers' cottages dating from the mid-18th century and the two streets form a charming and precious survival. Having resisted several attempts at demolition, the local community persuaded Salford to grant the cottages conservation area status. And, as the neglect by their owners continued, in 1994 Salford decided to acquire them by compulsory purchase. But now, following the local elections and frightened by the possible expense, the council has decided to withdraw the CPO as "no builder was interested in buying and restoring". This, as they say, is being a little economical with the truth. A local builder, Brian Newton, has reiterated his intention to buy the three houses and a vacant plot.

So why is the Labour-controlled authority assisting Sir Neil in his ambitions? After all, it is not as if such weavers' cottages are common after the comprehensive redevelopment mania of past decades. Salford may be proud of Salford Quays and is proposing the monster Lowry Centre, but in Irlams O'Th'Height it has something real and special which ought to be looked after.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

First Poetry Olympics Weekend

Westminster Abbey ● The Tabernacle ● Royal Albert Hall
5th-7th July 1996

Oyez Oyez — Hear the Voices of Bards — that Present, Past and Future Sing — now heralding: the first **Poetry Olympics Weekend** (POW!)

— to take place at Westminster Abbey (Poets' Corner), from 7.15pm on Friday 5th July 1996, with an **International Poetry Prelude and Symposium**;

— at The Tabernacle, Powis Square London W11, from 2.30-4.30pm on Saturday 6th July, with a **Children's Poetry Party**;

— and at the Royal Albert Hall from 3.30-10.30pm on Sunday 7th July, for the first **International Poetry Day**, with an unrepeatable marathon jamboree.

The weekend aspires to consolidate and extend the perpetual reawakening of imagination, celebration of dialects and Healing of the Nations, as have been evolved by New Departures and "Live New Departures" since 1959 — especially at Albert Hall's "First International Poetry Incarnation" (filmed by Peter Whitehead as "Wholly Communion") in 1965 — and by Poetry Olympics since its inception at Westminster Abbey in 1980.

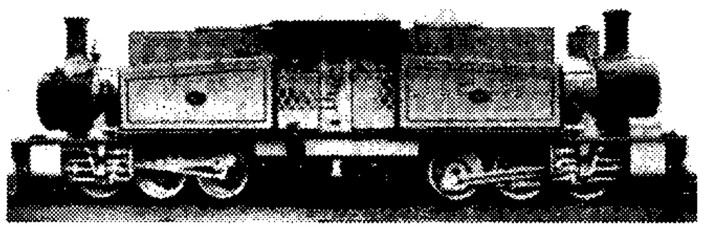
The Day, with "Wholly Communion" in mind, is subtitled "A Hip Mass" on the acronymic implications of "Albert Hall's first International Poetry, Music And Sunday Songfeast".

There will be specially composed tributes to, and readings from, leading poets who have died in living memory; performances of poetically inspired musics, and diverse settings of poems, by a plenitude of musicians; sets of the most adventuresome jazz poetry, and the most communicative current singer/songwriting, by outstanding practitioners; a session on poetry translation with distinguished poets and translators from far and wide — and much else.

With readings and performances by an unprecedented galaxy of major living troubadours, this could turn out to be the richest poetry feast ever...

MICHAEL HOROVITZ
Leaflet

£10 paid for entries



SIGNAL FAILURES

WITH a wave of the franchising director's magic wand, a useful service for passengers vanishes.

South Eastern Train Company (SET) established a service between Brighton and Ashford two years ago to provide a south coast connection with Eurostar trains calling at Ashford International station, which opened in January. Last year the franchising director ordered that the service be transferred to Network SouthCentral (NSC), the main operator in Brighton, so the franchise boundaries would be tidier for privatisation. In exchange SET was given the Gatwick to Maidstone service for the same reason (see *Eye* 886).

However, NSC was not the least bit interested in running the service SET had established with the longterm in mind. At the soonest opportunity — the timetable change on 2 June — the recently privatised NSC withdrew the service, saying it was not well used.

British Rail always reckoned it took several years to establish a new service and new travelling habits. The new private operators may not be prepared to sustain losses for that time, and the decision to axe the Brighton to Ashford service would have been taken even before its raison d'être — Ashford International — came into existence.

TRANSPORT secretary Sir George Young has been repeating claims published in a department of transport leaflet that privatisation has allowed the government to open more than 200 new stations since 1979. Perhaps somebody should point out to him that the railways have been, er, in state ownership for that period and that hardly any new stations were funded by central government.

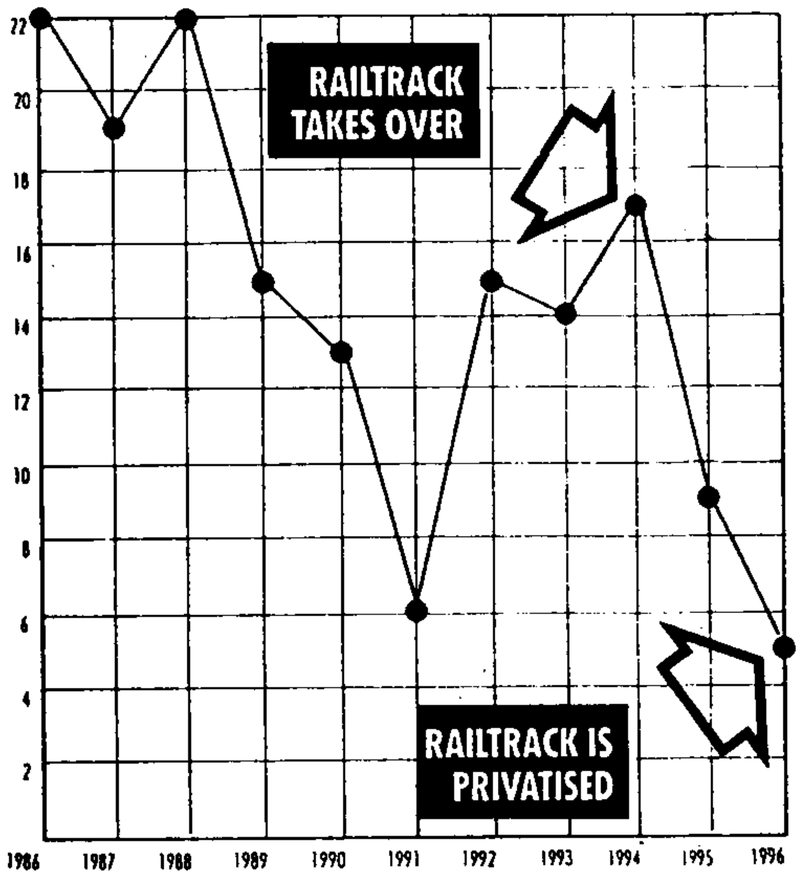
The task of repairing damage caused by Dr Beeching has been left to passenger transport executives and local authorities, helped by EU grants. Government departments have merely decided whether the councils may borrow money for new stations. In many cases permission has been withheld, station plans have been scaled down or schemes have been delayed as a result of this interference.

The DoT leaflet intended to reassure people about privatisation does the opposite. It highlights the old system in which BR was prepared to run loss-making trains for a few years while new custom developed and to assist local authorities with free use of specialists like station designers. Privatisation and the withdrawal of goodwill has increased the cost of building a station by 50 to 65 per cent.

FACT: Only five stations are planned to be opened in 1996, the lowest total for 15 years (one of those stations having been deferred from last year because of rising costs).

'Dr B. Ching'

Stations opened on the BR system



TV

Saturday Live (ITV)
TFI Friday (C4)
The Gaby Roslin Show (C4)

FROM their earliest days, live television shows took precautions to ensure that the audience looked as if they were having a good time. Now it aims for an audience that looks pissed.

The current home of legless spectators is what is known in the trade as Loaded TV, a programming equivalent of the lads' magazines that are currently so popular. The cocks of the walk are *TFI Friday*, the music-and-chat with Chris Evans, and *Saturday Live*, a revival of the 80s stand-up show which launched Ben Elton and Harry Enfield to fame, but which, in its new version, is in the hands of Chief Lad, Lee Hurst. Cutaways to the audience in both shows reveal shining eyes and glistening bottles.

Both these shows display the same basic dishonesty. The sense of danger comes only from the audience. Although they try on the surface to look as in-yer-face as possible, the relations between those on stage are resolutely up-yer-bum. The sense of a supportive and interlocking showbiz community is just as cloying as it was with the Tarby and Brucie generation and the Ken and Emma set.

On *Saturday Live* Hurst frequently refers lovingly to The Circuit, as in: "Ere's a bloke who started off on The Circuit about the same time as me, five years ago." Quick story, perhaps, about the night he died completely in Oldham? Do me a favour. In fact, like all Lee's guests, he's "fantastic! You're gonna love him!"

Even Evans, who has a formidable radio reputation for being rude — and who recently reassured his listeners that "we're not all in some cosy celebrity clique" — is only a long-distance bully. His opening monologue might contain a sarky crack at Andi Peters, but, when he's got guests Jack Dee and Hugh Laurie across the desk from him, he becomes a patsy, methodically reading cuttings-derived questions from a clipboard. Loaded TV turns out to be just more Luvvie TV but with a rat-arsed audience.

If the weekend is largely the province of the lads, Lass TV continues to make a rather poor showing in the form of *The Gaby Roslin Show*. From kindness, Square Eyes had been giving the series a chance to recover from its disastrous start before reviewing it. It surely had to get better. It hasn't.

In pre-series interviews Gaby promised a modern equivalent of the Parkinson chat shows of the 70s. By last Saturday's show, the Channel 4 continuity announcer had even dropped the word "chat" and was rather desperately billing it as "gossip with Gaby". How the mouthy are fallen. The station made Gaby a pound millionaire when they gave her this show, but were expecting her in return to make them ratings multi-millionaires. In fact, she's barely made it to the first million, and the poor saps at Channel 4 are committed to at least three series.

This week's edition amply demonstrated what is wrong. The guest list, as usual, revealed the curious belief of so many young British television producers that B-list American celebrities become post-modernist kitsch when flown to London. But, on Saturday, Aileen Getty, Lennox Lewis and Chris Penn prove again that the main impact of such people is to encourage the viewers to go and, er, kitsch up on their sleep (*This is terrible. Ed.*)

The other guest was Rory McGrath, being Laddish. This interview showed that Gaby is simply not grown-up enough to front a chat show for adults. Her tendency to cover her mouth in horror and bleat "Oh, you are cheeky! or "You're going to get me in trouble!" may have been appealing as foil to Evans on *The Big Breakfast*, but with her as the solo host it leaves the programme without an "anchor" (*You're fired. Ed*)

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

EMERGENCY cutbacks have been ordered at Radio Four following the "mis-budgeting" of £3 million.

Spending across a range of programmes will be pruned again, and at Broadcasting House morale, already low, has fallen through the floor.

A brilliant scheme afoot at *Woman's Hour* — one programme every two weeks to become a phone-in, the cheapest kind of radio to make.

WHEN Radio Four's *Desert Island Discs* invited the head of Granada Gerry Robinson on to the show, presenter Sue Lawley cooed over him.

Her opening spiel drooled: "He's maintained programme quality, acquired London Weekend Television and, when not keeping a beady eye on the ratings for *Coronation Street*, taken over the Forte group."

Oddly Lawley forgot to mention her own relationship with Robinson and Granada: for example, her ITV election coverage and, in particular, her Granada 500 public debate programmes. Recently it was also confirmed that she would work for Granada and across the ITV network for the forthcoming election. But she was far too busy grovelling to the great Mr Robinson to mention this to her *Desert Island* audience.

MEDIA coverage of the dismal corporate reorganisation of the Beeb — sprung on the world last Friday afternoon — has focused on fears of mass sackings and the way the new structure marginalises radio and the World Service. The main point has largely escaped notice: the changes lay the ground for the privatisation of the corporation.

Each of the four new divisions created by the Birt masterplan is potentially viable as a free-standing entity. BBC Production will make programmes that could be sold to anyone; BBC Resources owns and manages Auntie's equipment and expertise, which again could be available for hire to the highest bidder; BBC News has an instant recognition brand name that still means impartiality, authority and veracity in hundreds of millions of homes worldwide; and BBC Broadcast, which runs all radio and TV channels, is ideally placed to raise revenue by selling airtime (doubtless only on the new digital services at first) in order to buy in programmes and facilities.

Birt and his circle privately regard the licence fee as doomed, and they and the Tories have allowed it to wither on the vine. Meanwhile Auntie has applied to raise cash from the city under the government's private finance initiative. The process of flogging off the BBC's transmission network (probably to its own management) is already under way — a dry run for breaking up the rest of the corporation.

The beauty of the new structure is that it allows privatisation to go ahead under the guise of allowing the new divisions to "benefit from the freedom of the marketplace".

Of course the new structure solves this problem, too. It effectively sidelines the governors — devolving power to the chief executives of each of the new divisions

CHRIS PARR, head of drama serials at BBC TV, has been lying low since the *Eye*'s revelation of an internal inquiry into his relations with independent production companies.

Follow-up reports in the Sunday papers have speculated whether the BBC will investigate Parr's alleged lavish lifestyle, including the use of a chauffeur-driven limo with a television and video in the back. As well as having a holiday house in France, Parr also maintains a residency at the Kensington Hilton, where the basic charge for a single room is £140 a night.

Or, rather, he did: on 31 May, following the appearance of the last *Eye*, Parr suddenly checked out of the hotel, leaving no forwarding address.

I-I-I Special

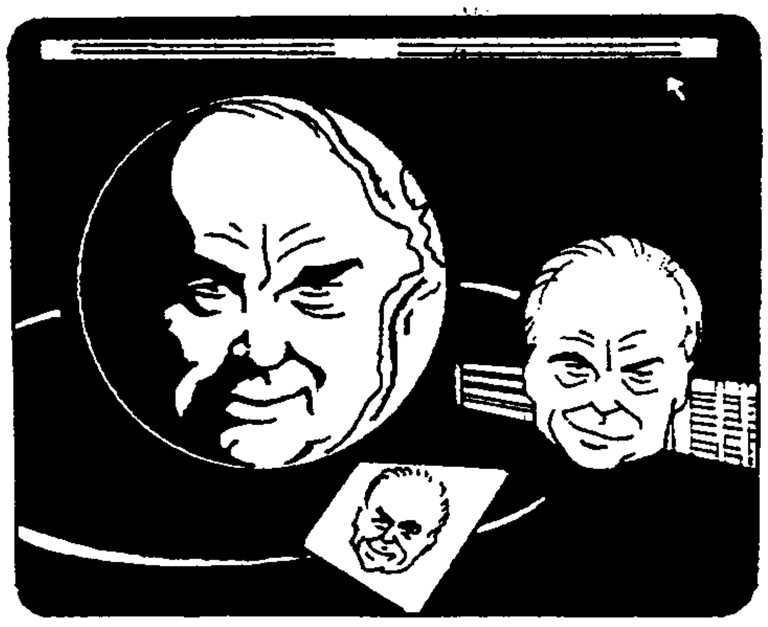
THIS week's Kim Il Sung Memorial Award for the greatest celebration of self goes to Great Helmsman and MP for North East Fife Menzies Campbell whose thirty appearances in print for the Lib Dem freebie *North East Fife News* are enlivened by no less than eleven magnificent photographic studies.

PISSPOOR cable station L!VETV's head of production Nick Ferrari has been threatening the few remaining employees with the sack. He told producers that those who did not come up with programme ideas would be fired.

So far the producers' repertoire has included the sophisticated *Lunchbox Volleyball*, about men's bulging shorts, and *Gail's Campus Capers*, in which drunken students are encouraged to shout at former Page Three model Gail McKenna telling her to "get her tits out". Curiously neither has won viewers, and staff are now being offered bonuses for any ideas which are even half-way crap.

One employee who was allowed to make her own programme was Louise Houston, a news reader before her news team was dissolved to further cut costs. Ferrari promised Houston she could produce and present her own idea — a cheap and cheerful events guide. But the promised bonus never materialised and after the first programme was broadcast Ferrari sacked Houston.

Susan Sylvester, formally of The Fantasy Channel, was appointed to produce the programme the next week with a stand-in presenter. This was a disaster for which Sylvester received the customary bollocking, and shortly afterwards Houston received a letter at home begging her to return to produce the programme.



THE launch of the wittily named News EyeQ by News Corporation and its American partner DataTimes Corp was predictably hyped by the Murdoch press.

"The service offers access to 6,000 sources of information, including newspapers and magazines, trade journals, company financial information, market research, country profiles, share prices, exchange rates and market indices," said the *Times*.

Indeed, those who tested it prior to the official launch say it's very good — just like an existing database called Profile, offered by Pearson's *Financial Times*.

In fact they are virtually the same; so similar that when the *FT* showed a lack of enthusiasm for supplying its own material to the new service, the Murdoch empire simply gave notice that it was cancelling a longterm contract with the *FT* and withdrew all News Corp copy from Profile.

This will do tremendous damage to Pearson's system, and Murdoch will dominate yet another media sector — unless Tony Blair, who opposes private monopolies such as the utilities or Railtrack, acts to lessen Murdoch's influence. Which he won't.

AS Owen Oyston settled into prison life his wife Vicki took over as chair of the family football team, Blackpool FC. She wasted no time in firing the club's manager.

While the move was allowed by the football league, the Oystons face a harder battle with the Radio Authority over the future of two stations they control: Morecambe's Bay Radio and Belfast's BCR.

The broadcasting act requires licence holders to be "fit and proper persons" — subjective wording which has caused problems in the past. If the authority concludes that Oyston isn't now a fit or proper person, the franchises will presumably have to be readvertised.

One man who will watch developments closely is Mohammed Fayed. Although he has never been convicted of rape (or indeed anything else), he is not deemed to be a fit and proper person to hold British citizenship, according to home secretary Michael Howard. He has, however, been deemed fit and proper by the government regulator to control London's Viva Radio through Liberty Media.

HACKWATCH

ZOE HELLER

ABOUT five years ago, in the *Independent on Sunday*, something remarkable happened to journalism: William Leith started writing a column about the piffling details of his everyday life — waking up, putting on the kettle, going to the loo.

Since then every paper has followed suit. But the undoubted Queen of these New Solipsists is Zoe Heller, who is paid a small fortune by the *Sunday Times* magazine to inform its readers what she had for dinner and how she is getting on with her boyfriend. It is gripping stuff:

14 January: "There's snow on the ground and the temperature is zero when I arrive back in New York from a trip to England." She is "tired and sneezy" and in an "advanced state of grumpiness".

21 January: Zoe's boyfriend stands beside her while she is making a phone call, "trying to feed me lines". She finds this "irritating". Meanwhile, a "noxious Frenchman" has taken up temporary residence in her apartment.

28 January: "Can we talk about this blizzard thing? I know — you saw the pictures on the news a couple of weeks back, third-biggest in history, blah blah, people skiing in Times Square, blah blah... You think it's long over. But believe me, it isn't." No indeed: Zoe fills the rest of her column with an extended grumble about the snowdrifts, blah blah...

4 February: "I've come to the Sundance resort in Utah with my boyfriend..." As usual, he is irritating her. But then they go out skiing and he falls over, whereupon she cheers up no end.

11 February: "I'm standing in line to order a chicken tandoori salad at some cafe on Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica." Fascinating! We also learn that Zoe has decided to move to Los Angeles, and is belatedly learning to drive.

18 February: "Before I left LA last week, I started looking for places to rent for my impending move there." Inevitably, it turned out to be a "grim exercise". To cheer herself up, she buys "a very tight, glamorous summer dress". Then she goes to the gym.

25 February: Returning to New York from a trip to England, Zoe is met at the airport by her boyfriend in a huge stretch limo. "Pretty much as soon as we got in, my boyfriend developed a bad stomach ache..." Later, on reaching their hotel, "my boyfriend was copiously sick in the loo".

3 March: It's Zoe's turn to be ill again. "It started off with stomach pains and nausea but by evening the stomach pains were gone, so I went out with my sister and her friend, Sue..." Two days later, she catches a cold.

17 March: "I was walking through the Village with a girlfriend the other day when we spotted a sample sale going on in one of the stores in Mercer Street," Zoe reports, breathlessly. "Egged on by my girlfriend I went in and bought a grey ankle-length coat."

31 March: "So I finally bit the bullet and made the move: I arrived in Los Angeles — with about 30 pieces of excess baggage — yesterday." At her boyfriend's house in LA, she "went straight to bed and passed out". In the morning, all her fingers are "weirdly swollen".

7 April: Whenever Zoe complains that everyone in LA is rather old, her boyfriend points out that she is no spring chicken herself. "At this point I usually flounce off to the bathroom." But it isn't all rows and sulks: "The big news this week is that I have discovered I can do a brilliant imitation of Babe the pig." Well done!

14 April: On Sundays, Zoe and her boyfriend take the boyfriend's father out for brunch. Then they drive him back to the boyfriend's house. "At around three, he falls asleep. At five he wakes up. Then we drive him back." And, er, that's it.

21 April: "This afternoon I burst into tears and told my boyfriend I hated Los Angeles." He suggests she should take up some new hobbies. Later, she buys herself a chicken takeaway and listens to the radio.

12 May: "Want to hear something amazing?" Yup, sure do. "I passed my driving test." Thanks.

19 May: Now that I am firmly ensconced in my own apartment, the tricky question of how to furnish it has arisen." Her boyfriend comes up with an inspired suggestion: visit a furniture store. They duly do so, but end up "bickering" yet again.

26 May: "Oh, the trauma of the last 10 days. First off, I forgot to renew my Prozac prescription..." To make matters worse, she has a new picture by-line on her column. An ex-boyfriend rings to say that it makes her look "dumpy". To cheer herself up, she buys a new car and gets some more Prozac.

2 June: In the hope of improving her social life, Zoe attends a lunch for "women of achievement" at the Century City Chamber of Commerce. " 'Did you make any friends?' my boyfriend asked hopefully when I got home. No, I told him, I rather thought not." To cheer herself up, she lies down on the floor for an hour, "very still and very quiet". How much excitement can one girl take?

CONSPIRACY NEWS

IT TOOK only a few weeks in the autumn of 1989 for hacks, editors and lawyers on the *Sunday Times* to realise that they had made a monumental booboo with a couple of articles about Owen Oyston and David Bookbinder.

The articles alleged that the pension funds of Derbyshire county council, where David Bookbinder was leader, engaged in share deals to rig the market and boost the shares of companies controlled by Owen Oyston. In fact neither Bookbinder, Oyston or Derbyshire county council had any control over the time of sale or price of the shares.

But the *Sunday Times* stuck to its guns. In 1991, two years after the article, it finally settled with the wealthy Oyston by paying him enormous damages and all his costs (a total of about £1 million). Bookbinder, who is not wealthy, wasn't so lucky. This month, seven years after its article, the paper finally admitted its howler, grovelled "unreservedly" and paid enormous damages and costs.

Why did the *Sunday Times* hold out for so long? Perhaps because its campaign against Bookbinder was so enthusiastically supported by Tory politicians. In 1991 Derbyshire South MP Edwina Currie announced: "The net is now closing in on Mr Bookbinder... I am convinced he will end up disgraced and disqualified from public life some time this year." She was wrong. Lord (Norman) Tebbit wrote that Derbyshire county council spent £50,000 on altering council letterheads. He was wrong.

The *Eye* can reveal an even more prestigious Tory ally for the *Sunday Times* vendetta against Bookbinder. In October 1989, David Waddington, then Tory chief whip, wrote to Alan Green, then director of public prosecutions, asking if the police were making inquiries into the *Sunday Times*'s phoney allegations. Green replied brusquely that there were no such inquiries. Contacted by the *Eye*, the CPS confirmed the letter but could not explain why a Tory chief whip should contact the director's office about possible prosecutions of a political opponent.

Perhaps the most energetic member of the "bully Bookbinder brigade" was Philip Oppenheim, Tory MP for Amber Valley. Oppenheim's name came up in the notorious "Murrin tapes" — the recordings made by Blackpool fish and chip merchant Fred Murrin when he was working as a freelance private detective for Lancashire Tory MPs Sir Peter Blaker (now Lord Blaker) and Robert Atkins.

As the last *Eye* recalled, Blaker and Atkins wanted Murrin to dig the dirt on Owen Oyston. Blaker insisted on the tapes that Oyston should be put "behind bars". His reference to Bookbinder is rather similar. "Oppenheim is your man," he says. "Oppenheim is taking this seriously. I talked to him yesterday. He is much interested in getting Bookbinder into the soup, which he believes Bookbinder deserves to be in. He says Bookbinder is a real so-and-so."

DOING THE ROUNDS

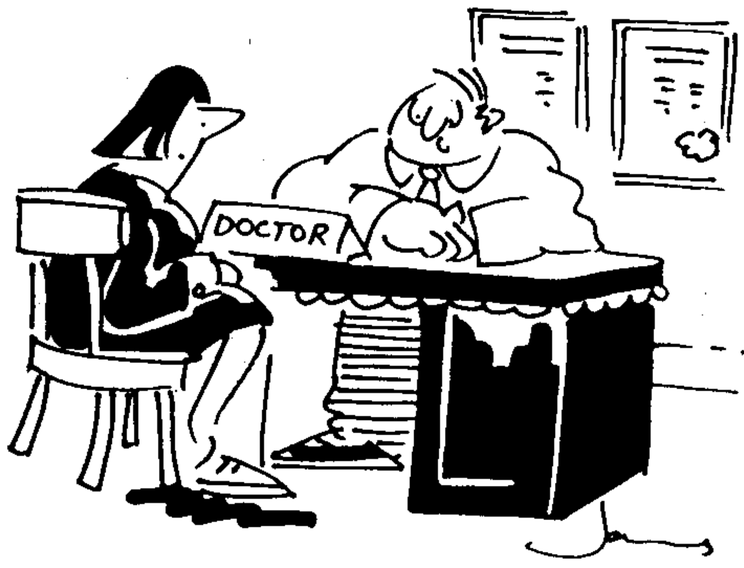
ON 4 MARCH, Arnold Verral wrote a letter about his late father's treatment to Mr M. Walledge, complaints coordinator at Harlow's Princess Alexandra Hospital, which demonstrates — among other things — why most people prefer to die at home.

"My father reached your hospital by emergency ambulance at 12.45pm on February 12, following a phone call from his GP stipulating that hospital admission was essential. On arrival, a noticeboard in reception informed us that we could expect a three-hour wait due to staff sickness. My father was wheeled on an ambulance trolley into a draughty corridor where my mother and I waited with him for two hours. During that time, a nurse took his pulse, temperature and blood pressure, and gave him an oxygen mask. However, despite his obviously deteriorating condition and our repeated request for further examination, none was forthcoming. At 2.45pm he was allocated a cubicle, but was not seen by a doctor until 6.45pm.

"The doctor who eventually examined him said that he was extremely dehydrated, which came as no great surprise as my mother and I had repeatedly expressed our concern to several members of staff that he was unable to tolerate any food or drink for over two days. However, we were told that no food or drink could be administered prior to being seen by a doctor. Before any action was taken to rehydrate him, he had to endure a series of X rays when he was clearly in severe distress and lapsing into unconsciousness. By the time a drip bag was produced at 7.15pm, it took ten minutes to locate a drip stand. His oxygen tank was replaced, but only after I pointed out that it was empty. The soap dispenser in the cubicle was empty and no pillow could be found to support his head.

"At 10pm, the doctor we had previously seen informed us that a line would have to be inserted into my father's neck, and politely asked us to wait outside. Several doctors came and emerged shortly afterwards to tell us he required urgent renal dialysis. My father was transferred to the **Royal London hospital** at 11pm after a further delay due to a non-starting ambulance and a failure to locate some jump leads. On arrival at the Royal London, he was immediately located a bed and dialysis was commenced. This was unsuccessful and he was again transferred, to the intensive care unit at **Bart's hospital**, where he died without regaining consciousness.

"My father suffered from a serious illness, but had he received prompt medical treatment at your hospital he would have at least been able to say his last goodbyes to us... Yours sincerely..."



"You've got Scarlet Fever — and, frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn"

● THE great pay-bed debate — should **NHS hospitals** give preferential treatment to private patients if the profits are ploughed back into the sub-optimal treatment of the poor? — may soon be academic if **BUPA** has its way.

Britain's biggest and bubbliest private health insurer is trying to tempt patients away from the NHS back into deserted private hospitals with panoramic views but very little in the way of round the clock emergency cover. Those patients who comply will be rewarded with mouth-watering "credits" such as future health screening and visits to the gymnasium.

If successful, BUPA and other companies which follow suit could funnel off £200 million of private dosh from the NHS. Of course whenever there's a cock-up, patients who survive will be ferried back to an NHS intensive care unit for the taxpayer to pick up the tab. A classic lose-lose situation.

BUPA has not just selected any old private repository to include in its new scheme, just "the highest quality hospitals in the country which offer excellent standards of clinical care and first class patient service". Hospitals have not, alas, been queuing up to join since they will in effect be subsidising BUPA, which is demanding a 20 percent discount on treatment charges. However, a BUPA brochure proudly lists a chain of 11 Priory hospitals across the country which has agreed to provide psychiatric services under the new scheme. Unfortunately if you contact the hospitals directly, they deny any knowledge of it.

● THE **Countess of Chester NHS trust (COCNT)** is facing a £3-£5 million debt for the year, not helped by the decision of **Chester's GP fundholders** to award all their urological contracts to **Crewe**. In response COCNT is trying to make itself more urologically appealing by appointing two more urological surgeons, including one from... er... Crewe. This leaves Crewe with just the one urologist, who is so enjoying the NHS reforms that he is emigrating to Australia. So Crewe will shortly have no urologists and all Chester's fundholder contracts, while Chester has two urologists and no contracts. Crewe now wants to subcontract Chester's contracts back to Chester. This cunning solution will have cost little more than several million management hours and a rain forest in administrative memos.

● WHILE nurses and student nurses across the country face massive increases in their rents forcing many to give up and earn some decent money, the **British Nursing Association** has flown to Australia in a mass recruitment programme to solve the manpower crisis. Antipodean nurses are being tempted to Britain with free flights and... er... free nursing accommodation. The BNA will doubtless be offering similar enticements to penniless British nurses.

● **LUTON and Dunstable NHS trust** chief executive Bob Angle will be driving into work with his wife and new head of the intensive care unit Jane. Bob was on the panel that created Jane's position, but left the choosing to his clinical directors. As Unison officer Kumar Sandy put it: "Husband and wife teams are well established in pub management but this may be a first in the NHS." He obviously hasn't worked in Scotland (see *Eye* 898).

M.D.

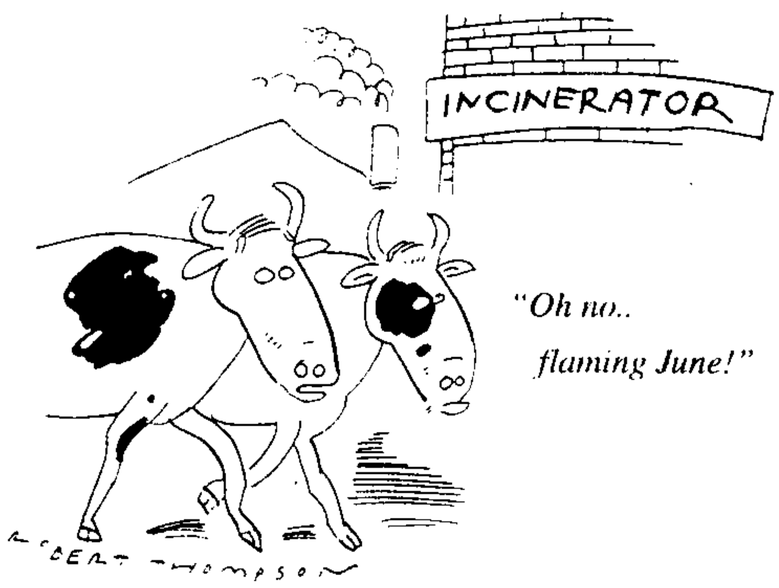
DOWN ON THE FARM

CURIOUSLY unreported by the national media was the case heard in the high court last week by Mr Justice Popplewell.

In what will prove to be an important test case the Meat Hygiene Service, aka the Most Hated Service, continued to try and recover its fees from an impoverished lancashire slaughterhouse owner.

The MHS is the organisation set up by former agriculture minister John "*Drittsek*" Gummer to implement EU meat inspection law and this meatman from Knowsley ,along with 125 others, is refusing to pay up because the MHS is so useless.Claims have been made recently that spinal chords — possibly infected with the BSE agent — have been found in beef carcases in slaughterhouses.Now it turns out that all but one of the spinal chords were attached to carcases which had been inspected by the Meat Hygiene Service and stamped as fit for human consumption. To protect these officials from making any more mistakes, the MHS has taken on several hundred more inspectors to look for BSE material, plus other inspectors to watch over them. With supervisory vets already in place being given extra hours to check these inspectors, and MAFF officials watching them, we now have inspectors inspecting the inspectors, inspecting the inspectors inspecting the inspectors who are watching the men who do the work.

Thus in one Welsh abattoir four eagle-eyed inspectors watched one harassed slaughterperson kill 10 cattle while falling over each other in the confines of the slaughterhall. And, for this the MHS want £15 million on top of the £34 million already levied from the meat industry. Small wonder that so many abattoir owners are refusing to pay.

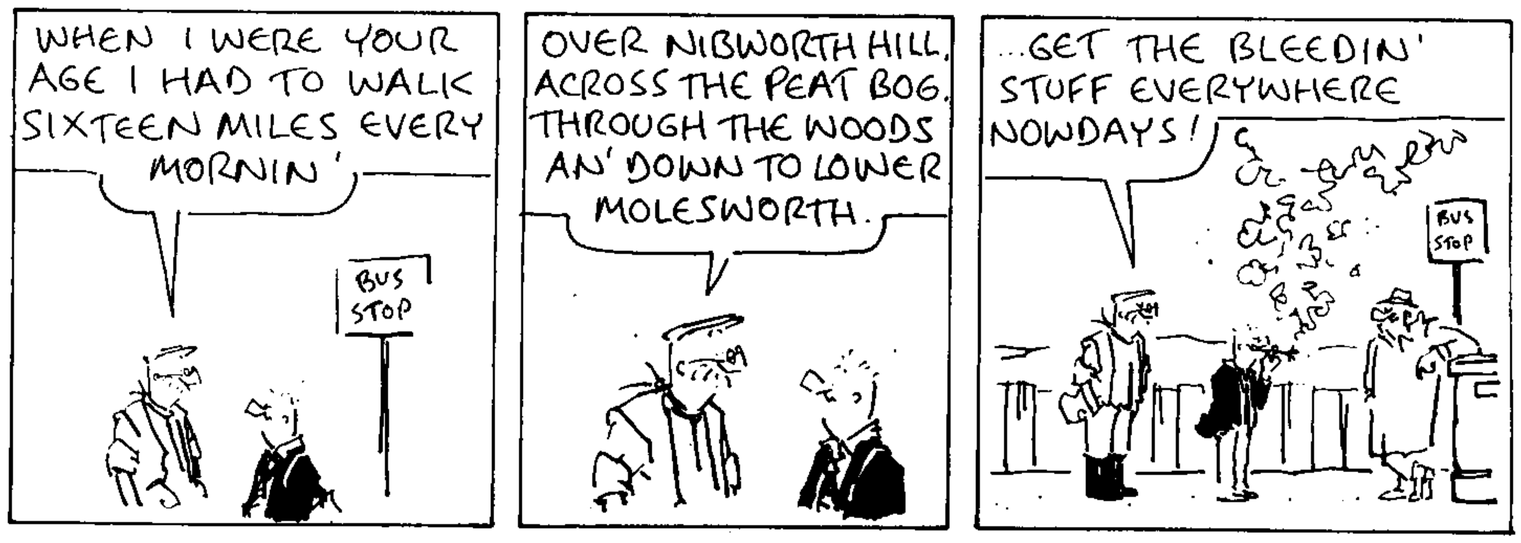


"Oh no.. flaming June!"

It is without doubt a coincidence, however, that with a few minor exceptions only those slaughterhouses that have paid their MHS bills have been selected to take part in the Maffia's extremely lucrative 30-month cattle extermination scheme.

Old Macdonald

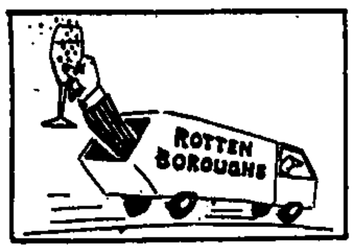
ALBERT


WHEN I WERE YOUR AGE I HAD TO WALK SIXTEEN MILES EVERY MORNIN'
BUS STOP
OVER NIBWORTH HILL, ACROSS THE PEAT BOG, THROUGH THE WOODS AN' DOWN TO LOWER MOLESWORTH.
...GET THE BLEEDIN' STUFF EVERYWHERE NOWDAYS!
BUS STOP

MEANWHILE the other big lottery — the common agriculture policy (CAP) — continues, with the Maffia struggling to distribute £3 billion of taxpayers' funds to farmers.

To spare these poor creatures the ordeal of having to struggle to the banks to cash their subsidy cheques, the kindly Maffia had arranged for the money to be paid direct into their accounts via the bankers automated clearing system (BACS). Alas, it was not to be. With 35,000 deserving applicants for the scheme, the Maffia computer at York could not cope, and the farmers must continue to make their arduous journeys to their banks.

'New Muckspreader'



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 14 June 1996

LABOUR GOES TO HULL . . .

HULL, heartland of Labour deputy leader John Prescott, is hosting a jolly scrap between the city's departing lord mayor John Black, a "new" Labourite and close ally of Prescott, and traditionalist MP Stuart Randall, Labour member for West Hull.

The pair first crossed swords two years ago when Black mounted a quickly quashed reselection campaign against Randall.

They then exchanged abusive letters over a housing scheme Black was running. Randall said it did not follow Labour party policy. Black retorted that Randall should familiarise himself with policy and continued: "It is not surprising that there is much disquiet with regard to your suitability and competence to represent the Labour party in West Hull." Randall responded: "Your comments were inexcusably rude, hysterical and deeply insulting."

The latest clash came at Black's leaving-do at Hull's Guild Hall. Although the councillors involved are loyally keeping schtum, it was believed to have involved the departing lord mayor and the husband and wife councillors Brian and Brenda Petch. After a heated argument Brian Petch and Black reportedly "clashed" in a corridor. Randall took the opportunity to write to Labour leader Tony Blair calling for Black's suspension from the party.

What is more relevant to the people of Hull is that Black was the housing committee chairman who embraced the Tory government's first-ever housing action trust (HAT), taking £12,000 a year as a HAT vice-chairman. Now 600 council houses are to be demolished under the controversial scheme — paid for by the single regeneration budget — which is administered by the local quango City Vision. Black is a member of the steering group for the quango.

The scheme intends to replace council housing with a mixture of private and housing association properties. One of the associations which has been invited to participate is Pickering and Ferens Homes, which also happens to be chaired by Black. While the housing plans are being reviewed for City Vision by Price Waterhouse, Hull awaits the next round of Labour in-fighting with bated breath.

Crying Wolfson

AIGBURTH in Liverpool certainly produces colourful councillors.

First, Jim Thomson was arrested for bank robbery in March (*Eye* 898). Now we learn that his erstwhile Lib Dem colleague, Cathy "the fishwife" Hancox, has had a business relationship with a well-known local con artist.

Why Hancox — hitherto seen as a respectable councillor of long standing — should associate with Leonard Wolfson, a used car salesman with convictions for dishonesty dating back to the 1970s, is intriguing. Yet she served as a director of his company, Finsbury Property Services Ltd, which tried to buy a children's home from the city council. Hancox even showed Wolfson round the property before purchase.

Finsbury Property offered half a million pounds for the home, but then persuaded Liverpool council to accept just £350,000 on 17 January. Coun Hancox was at the council meeting where this was approved but did not declare her interest until three weeks later. The bid has now been thrown out, while the district auditor investigates.

Hancox also acted as a "character witness" for Wolfson in a court case at which the judge branded him "a menace", put him on probation and said if he could he would ban Wolfson from trading in used cars for ever.

IN BRIEF

LEEDS: The city council's pride in hosting Euro 96 matches is not shared by local business. Not one of the 400 companies it asked to sponsor a special exhibition and bus service agreed, leaving the public with a £47,000 bill.

WHITWORTH: Furious locals in this Rochdale parish want their council abolished after clerk Gerry Taylor, ex-navy, was able to disappear last November — at the same time as £100,000, nearly the entire council budget. Neither has been seen since.

CAMDEN: The health and safety executive (HSE) wants to prosecute the Labour council for failing to check all 30,000 of its council-owned properties for faulty gas heaters. The deadline was 31 October and the council is still at it.

JUNKET LATEST

TEN members of Southwark's street trading consultative forum have now returned from the three-day "investigation" of Parisian street markets they unanimously voted to send themselves on. The party comprised four councillors, two council officers and four street traders, and Labour's Nicholas Dolezal caused surprise in the chamber when he announced that the mayor of Paris had paid for the trip. *Mais non*: Southwark paid the £3,000 bill, the French paid for the food.

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

LEITH Harbour councillor Derick Wilson appeared at Edinburgh sheriff court and admitted embezzling more than £4,500 while secretary of Shiva (Scottish HIV Action), a prostitutes' support group. Sentence was deferred until 24 June, and Wislon is no longer a member of the Labour group.

. . .AND BACK AGAIN

THEY are still at each others' throats in Hackney, where the Labour national executive's decision to disband the entire Labour council group over its handling of the Bernard Crofton affair, among other things, has backfired.

In true comradely fashion, the suspended party hacks are not even united in their misery: they are split down the middle, with some wanting housing boss Crofton sacked on trumped-up grounds of racism, and others seeing him as their best hope of rooting out corruption in the fraud-ridden borough.

Unfortunately the Gang of Four Labour has appointed to run the place — leader Nick Tallentire, chief whip Peter Kenyon and group officers Julie Grimble and Bill Leadbitter — all support Crofton's immediate sacking, regardless of his guilt or innocence.

A series of letters between chief executive Tony Elliston and Tallentire has further poisoned the air. Elliston claims Tallentire has "fabricated" a conversation between them which never took place. Elliston accuses the Gang of Four of threatening him with the sack if he doesn't fire Crofton. He also claims chief whip Kenyon has spread a rumour that the chief executive, who is happily married, has been attending meetings of the Ugandan sub-committee with deputy leader Meral Ece... who happens to be a Crofton supporter.

Elliston is now investigating claims that Crofton has lied to Ian Macdonald, the QC who is conducting a pisspoor inquiry into Hackney. Amazingly, when the chief executive asked Macdonald for transcripts of conversations and evidence on which he based his findings the barrister refused. So Hackney has had to demand the documents back on pain of injunction and legal action.

Bent Triple

WHILE Labour is in charge of Bent thanks to the casting vote of new mayor Lata Patel, a book has opened on how long it will be before she switches to the Tories.

Defection is traditional in Bent and Patel seems ripe for conversion — like the three adjacent houses she owns in Wembley. Having knocked down the inner walls to make one huge house, she lives there with her boyfriend Kantilal Patel (no relation) and his, er, wife Kusum.

The Patels (Lata and Pantilal) are millionaires thanks to the petrol pump business they have built since fleeing Uganda in the 1970s. What worries the Lab-Lib coalition, which relies on Ms Patel's vote, is her friendship with two Tory councillors: Chuni Chavda and Navin Patel (no relation either).

Navin Patel is himself a former Labour candidate and a photo of the now-Tory councillor popping an Indian sweet into Ms Patel's mouth now adorns her mantelpiece.

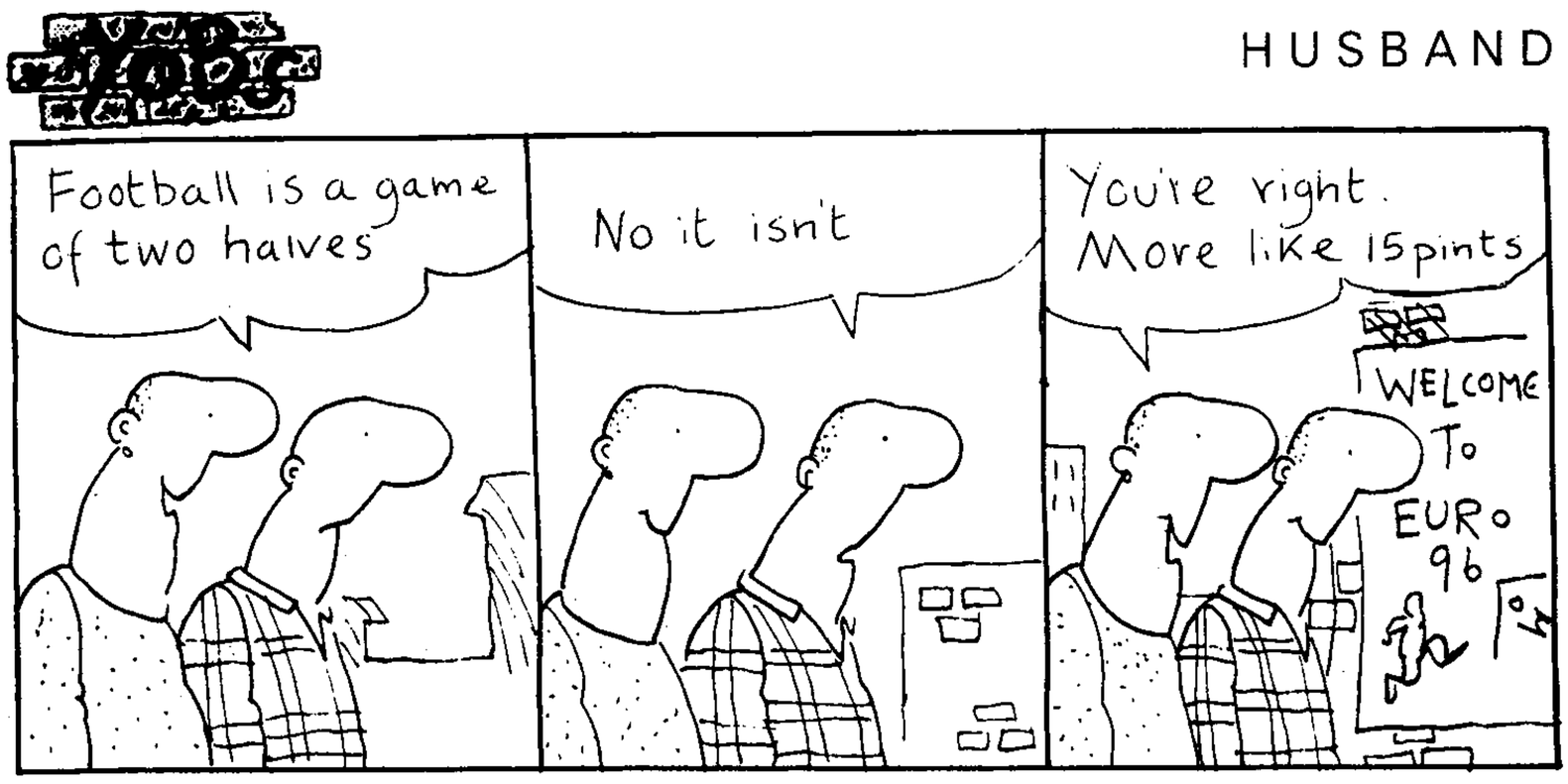
CHILD ABUSE

ORKNEY islands' social services department still faces problems despite the compensation to four families whose children were seized after allegations of satanic abuse.

In the case of the W family the mother is still fighting to reunite her family following abuse allegations. The accommodation costs for the six W children in care last year have now been revealed as £120,000. Three years' lack of contact between mother and children prompted a recent Orkney hearing to recommend long-term rehabilitation.

Two W children still remain in care. One of them was only seven years old when she was taken from home for questioning sessions which left her suffering repeated nightmares. Two months later she "confessed" to being abused.

In the Ayrshire child abuse case Lord Hope found matters so flawed he ordered the children's immediate return. No such prospect awaits the W family: in June adoption proceedings begin.



Letters

Ass you were

Sir,

As a personal friend of Sir Nigel Gosling for over 35 years, would you allow me to correct three errors of fact in your paragraph about him?

1. NCP, of which he is co-founder, is not useless or it would have ceased to exist many years ago.

2. His yacht "Leander" has never got stuck under a bridge.

3. He is not Sir Nigel Gosling.

I don't suppose for a moment that you would feel any necessity for making some amends for your scurrilous remarks by publishing the true facts.

He joined the Royal Navy as soon as he was old enough, and saw active service in World War 2 as an able seaman. He then became one of the founders of The White Ensign Association, to assist naval personnel on their return to civvy street; and he has put so much energy — as well as vast sums of money — into charitable projects for the Royal Navy that he was awarded the unique honour of being personally gazetted Captain RNR by the Queen: something that has probably never happened before to a rating from the lower deck.

Could it be that his origins are too humble for the aristocratic Marquesa? Or does she sling mud at him because NCP has no special rates for a donkey?

CHARLES STEER,
Kingston on Thames.

Beak viewing

Sir,

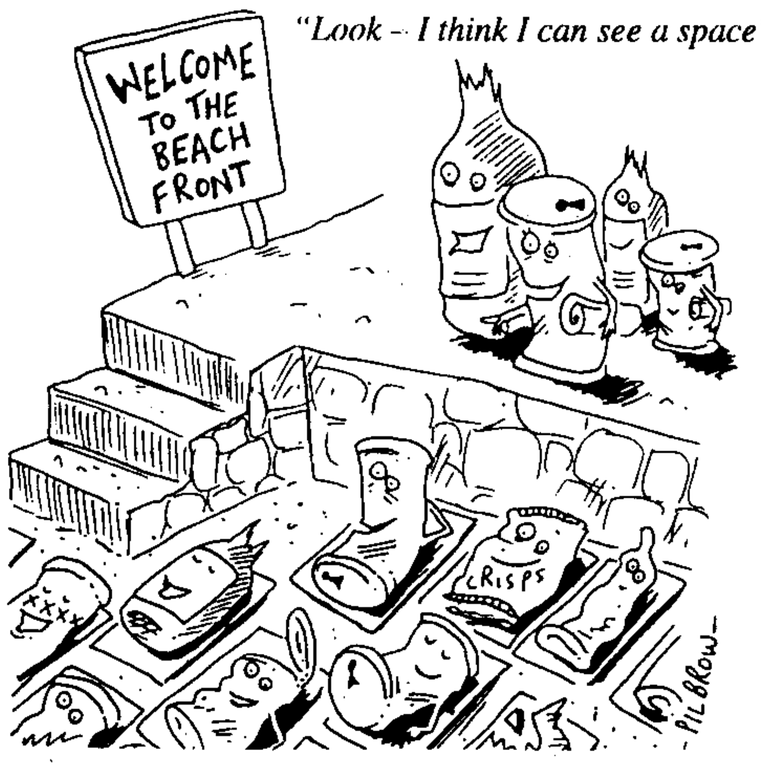
Yes, editors and journalists and radio producers like me value Professor Steve Jones because he is that rare bird: a working scientist who can talk to an ordinary audience in a way that is clear, simple and sharp. But that talent for popularising seems to have got right up the nose of the sarky sod who does your Literary Review (EYE *899).*

Your anonymous critic can't seem to bear the notion that someone from a laboratory should have opinions and views like all the other arts-educated pundits and bores. I suppose picking a fight with the Prof and calling him vain and conceited and so on is all part of knockabout criticism today (though it sounds like envy to me), but your reviewer is quite wrong to state that Jones is "somewhat shifty" about "scientific racism". In his Reith Lectures, in THE LANGUAGE OF THE GENES, *in his journalism and broadcasting, as well as* IN THE BLOOD, *Professor Steve Jones has clearly and consistently pointed out how much prejudiced nonsense has been written about race, and he has brought coolness and sense to an often inflammatory subject.*

And by the way, although your reviewer might have found the joke on the book-jacket "not very funny", the main reason I like Steve Jones, and have interviewed him three times, is that he is very sardonic and witty. And not conceited at all.

Yours etc,
NICK RANKIN,
BBC World Service, London WC2.

"Look – I think I can see a space"



A sausage rôle

Sir,

What a surprise! A Labour-supporting celeb gets banged up for playing "hide the sausage" and the EYE *immediately reacts with horror and petulant cries of "Tory dirty tricks".*

I do not for one instant suppose that you would have been anything as slaveringly sympathetic had the wretched "Miss B" fallen prey to the amorous advances of Archer, Aitken or even His Lordship of Hillhead.

Can't you take it when one of yours gets done, arseholes?

Yours etc,
J.M. SOMERS,
Eastbourne.

Under construction

Sir,

It is a pity that the often percipient Piloti reveals the stamp of a tiny mind (Nooks & Corners, 31 May). I thought the picture of the V&A's new extension in your organ looked rather nice and I bet a lot of others did too. The trouble is that I don't understand all this stuff about Deconstructionists, and nor does Daniel Libeskind, which is why he doesn't call himself one. He says he's an architect and I say he's a very good architect. Could it be that Piloti is the Deconstructed one — or do I mean Unreconstructed?

Yours sincerely,
DR ALAN BORG,
V&A.

Medal fatigue

Sir,

I have been heartened by the extent and quality of coverage given by PRIVATE EYE *to the ethical issues raised by the sale of Timothy Clifford's private collection of medals. The furore which this has stirred up results from* **perceptions** *(by the media and public) of possible conflicts of interest between Mr Clifford's position of trust — to do his best for the public by virtue of his position as a museum professional — and his situation as a private citizen in selling his own property. Those perceptions are important, and that is why I stand by my statement that I'd much rather he — or any museum professional — didn't do this kind of thing. Museums essentially act as guardians of public collections, and my job as convenor of the Museums Association's ethics committee is, above all else, to safeguard that public interest in what museums do.*

I am concerned with establishing the facts behind the perceptions, and this is what we will be attempting to do when the ethics committee meets on 19 June.

When the ethics committee considers this case, it will be in the light of as much evidence as we can assemble, so that a fair and informed view can be reached. We will always uphold the public interest in what we do, and that includes treating individuals with fairness and impartiality.

Yours faithfully,
TRISTRAM BESTERMAN,
Convenor, Museums Association Ethics Committee.

Provided for and against

Sir,

The Birmingham Women's Workshops (PRIVATE EYE, *3 May) were set up to provide vocational training for unemployed women who faced significant barriers in the job market — for example, women from ethnic minorities, single parents and those with very few qualifications.*

Your conjecture as to why grants were stopped is quite ludicrous. Funding was withdrawn in 1995 mainly because the training needs of the women concerned have over the years been met more and more by mainstream providers such as the TEC and further education colleges.

As to the equipment mentioned, much of it belonged to the BWW. Other items have been recycled with the council's own educational and training establishments.

Yours sincerely,
COUN. THERESA STEWART,
Leader of Birmingham City Council.

LUVVIES

"I reveal myself when I act. There is a certain sensuality standing in front of the camera. It represents something mysterious, having that black machine with a hole and knowing that someone is behind it. I never try to think further because it's disturbing. But I have never presented my body to the screen — more my mind."

CATHERINE DENEUVE
European Magazine

Submitted by Reay Jehu.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Yes man

Sir,

Re: In the City, 17 May. The starry-eyed idealists and gravy-train opportunists who find Sir Jams'd message unattractive overlook the point that his cosmopolitan credentials must if anything increase, rather than detract from, its credibility.

The EYE*'s feud with Fishpaste makes that of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines look like a lovers' tiff. Long may it continue. But (the usually excellent) Slicker should reflect: what is at issue is whether the British are to be allowed a vote on whether or not to continue with (or rather return to) self-government. Two views on this are possible, neither of which necessarily entails "all-purpose" xenophobia.*

If the "Yes" vote in '75 was bought with a true prospectus, and if the EC has been efficient, responsible and incorrupt since, then the pro-Brussels faction has nothing to fear from a referendum and may safely attend to the message rather than the financier, er, messenger.

Yours sincerely,
P. STUART,
Richmond upon Thames.

Worm's Eye view

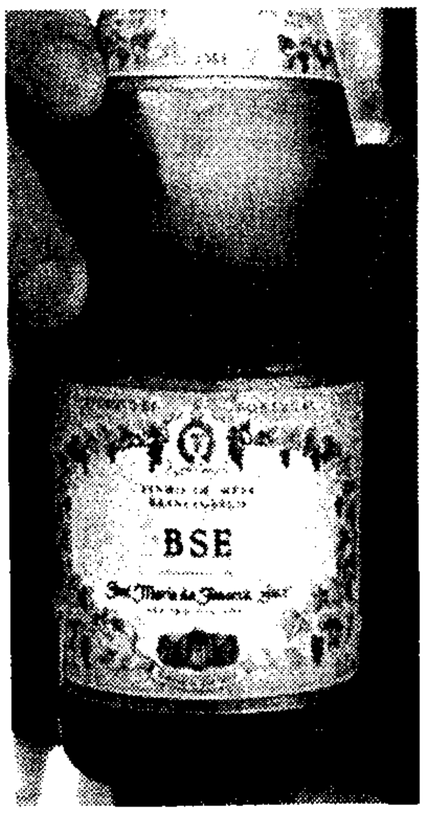
Sir,

Having been a subscriber for around four years I am still constantly surprised at the breathtaking arrogance of your reviewers, both "Square Eyes" and "Bookworm". They both seem to miss the irony of the fact that with each damning word they write, they themselves are as guilty of conceit as the poor saps on the receiving end of their stinging barbs. Nowhere has this been better illustrated than in EYE *899: "Matthew, Mark, Luke and Jones". Who the hell does Bookworm think he/she is?*

Take the paragraph: "Such conceit has always been around in one form or another. Bishops used to have it, and Lords. Now, however, it's a specialty of a certain sort of scientist. Although their individual contributions to the world of science may have been tiny, they assume all the credit of the discipline as a whole. For the most part, they assume that the opinions of non-scientists are pointless, not worth considering any more, utterly abolished by progress". Simply replace the words "scientist" and "science" with "book reviewer" and "literature" and you begin to see what I mean.

KEITH WICKHAM,
Via e-mail.

I-Spy



Portuguese wine label

Submitted by John Halsall. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Coming to terms

Sir,

Re: Siemens stained. As an occasional reader of PRIVATE EYE, *I was quite taken to see my own name appear in a place I normally associate as being reserved for more distinguished and illustrious characters, although reading about oneself is only half as much fun as reading about others. Ever keen to maintain traditions, however, I thought I should give my response to the points raised:*

1. Siemens is actually working very closely with the Inland Revenue on the administration of the company's overseas payroll scheme, which has complexities shared with most other international organisations.

2. Full disclosure of my house transaction was made to the Inland Revenue within a matter of months, and all tax liabilities were settled.

As to the "gagging claim", Mr Harries was no more gagged than Siemens itself by the usual confidentiality agreement signed in such cases. Siemens intends to honour the terms of this agreement and, for this reason, I regret we cannot correct in detail the inaccuracies in your article or comment on Mr Harries' assumptions. One thing I can correct, however, is the spelling of my name (see below). Finally, let me add that, if you want to see a real "furious row", please come and join me when I discuss this article with our Media Relations Manager!

JUERGEN (with an "e" and a "g") GEHRELS,

Siemens.

Handy man

Sir,

Despite claims by HP Sauce and disappointingly for "new" Labour (31 May), I am not standing down as editor of TRIBUNE.

It is true that I am supplementing my income with some part time consultancy work, but then many other editors do the same. In my case impoverishment has forced my hand. Still, it's nice work if you can get it.

Fraternally,
MARK SEDDON,

Editor, Tribune.

Sussex appeal

Sir,

*The nursing home run by Haven Healthcare which featured in Doing The Rounds last week (*EYE *899) is in West Sussex. The successor organisation to Worthing Health Authority is West Sussex Health Authority and not East Sussex Health Authority as reported.*

Yours sincerely,
ALAN BEDFORD,

Chief Executive, East Sussex, Brighton and Hove Health Authority.

Stand and demolish

Sir,

*Could the article in the Rotten Borough Advertiser (*EYE *899) which criticised Celtic FC and its support over the construction of a new grandstand be related in any way to the article in the* DAILY RECORD *of Thursday 9 May where plans to demolish nearby houses and relocate tenants was described as a "blessing" by tenants and where local councillor Smith said she was "delighted with the news"?*

Yours sincerely,
JAMES McGANN,

Glasgow.

The Di is cast

Sir,

How can the NATN logo and Di be alike? After all, one's a monochrome, two-dimensional abstraction and the other... er...

Yours,
PHIL ALEXANDER,

Via email.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Ronnie O'Sullivan, twenty years of age, but his shoulders are much older..."
TED LOWE, BBC2
(David Allsopp)

"Schumacher is the fastest man on the track. He's going round quicker than anybody else."
MURRAY WALKER, BBC
(David & Barbara Desborough)

"He [footballer Ben Thatcher] is only 20, but he's already played for the England Under-21 side."
"Kick Off Live", Anglia TV
(Karl Gibbs)

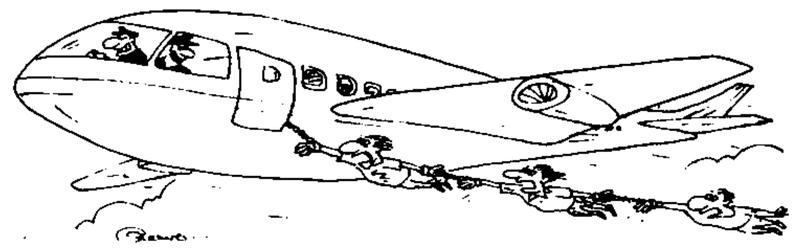
"As soon as the cashflow stops, they start to crumble like a pack of cards..."
KEN RUNDLE, BBC Scotland
(Andrew Wilson)

Mrs Bradshaw (pasty-maker): *These are are vegetarian pasties.*
Lady Thatcher: *Lovely — and have you put much meat in them?*
BBC2
(John Perry)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

HANDCUFFS ON JETS SHOCK



Letter from **Phnom Penh**

from Our Own Correspondent

PRIOR to our first democratic elections in 1993, the two parties who now form Cambodia's ruling coalition, the communist CPP and the royalist FUNCINPEC, were at war. Since then their close relationship, albeit with the odd spat, has surprised observers.

The fact that the relationship holds together at all is not wholly unrelated to the fact that the two prime ministers, Hun Sen and King Sihanouk's illegitimate son, Prince Ranariddh, have discovered that as a coalition they can make squillions of millions of dollars by selling large hunks of Cambodia to foreigners.

Thus poverty-stricken Cambodia is being buried under a pile of Malaysian-owned casinos. But more disturbing is what's happening to our forests. While the international community coughs up half our US$600 million annual budget, which just about keeps the population alive, our two prime ministers concentrate on the important issue of accumulating Marcos-style millions in a massive forest sell-off.

In a rare display of efficiency, their chief bag man, our revered minister of agriculture Tao Seng Hour, last year managed to sell off all our forests, 6.4 million hectares of them, to foreign companies. This was despite a complete timber cutting and export ban imposed on 30 April 1995. So successful has he been that the last two companies on his master list of timber concessions bear the legend "no forests left to allocate".

Presented with some unwelcome publicity about these deals last November, our democratic leaders announced a "massive logging rethink". So, in January this year, true to their promise they announced the export of 1.1 million cubic metres of "already felled" timber to Thailand. They say this "felled" timber will go to waste if it is not exported. But, according to the Thai companies benefiting from the deal, they don't have any felled timber: they are cutting down between US$350-650 million worth of forests, er, now.

An exciting twist to all this is that these forests are home to the genocidal Khmer Rouge, who stand to make more than US$35 million in "taxes" from the Cambodian government inspired deal. This idea of fighting a civil war which is killing and maiming thousands of our soldiers and civilians while fundraising for one's battlefield enemy at the same time is pretty novel. The International Monetary Fund was as sick as a, well, Pol Pot when it heard about the deal and froze its support.

Meanwhile the deforestation is causing floods and droughts which threaten our staple foods of rice and fish. In addition to these threats to our food supply, we live in the shadow of a civil war almost entirely funded by timber revenue. This revenue funds the land mines that blow the legs off the farmers and their children who have to tend their fields or starve.

Criticism of the logging industry is not welcomed by the few people who actually benefit from the trade, however. Journalists have been shot, critical politicians are sacked or exiled and indigenous people are forcibly evicted. After all, villas in the south of France and numbered Swiss bank accounts are at stake.

While the international community debates its future support for Cambodia, our leaders are rubbing their hands together. They know that to prop up an ailing UN "success" story, to salve their international consciences and to keep up with the aid pledging Joneses, the donors (except the IMF) will probably all continue to underwrite the welfare of the average Cambodian. This will leave our despotic bosses free to do what they do best: preparing for their retirement somewhere near Cap Ferrat.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "We screamed 'No!' but it was too late," Sgt. James Manos told reporters at a press conference in Eureka, California. "We were explaining to her that you just can't do that in public, when she suddenly pulled her left boobie out of her halter top, asked me if I could still remember the taste of real mother's milk, and began squirting it in my face."

The unnamed woman had been detained by Eureka police after an incident in Angelo's Pizza Parlor, 215W Seventh St. "The owner called us because the woman was jumping from table to table, annoying customers by making mooing sounds and telling them she was an old cow who could still produce milk four years after giving birth. And she was giving them a squirt to prove it. We knew straight away who it was, because it's the third time we've detained her this year. In February, she squirted milk at a man and his baby in the Adorni Memorial Recreation Center, while shouting 'bet you can't do this sonny'. Then in April she was found squirting over books in the child-care section of the county library. She's now promised to stop doing it. I hope so, because she squirted pap over the files on my desk and they've started to stink." *(Times-Standard [Eureka], 9/1/96. Spotter — Pauline McLynn)*

— ● —

● "Just because we're nuns doesn't mean we always have to turn the other cheek," Sister Arulmozhi told visitors to St Anne's convent in Madras. "We will forgive, but we do God's work with fists of steel and, if anyone messes with us, make no mistake — they're dead men."

Karate classes were introduced for all eighty nuns at the convent last year, after several had been harassed, robbed, or beaten. According to Sister Leema, 86, "we see no contradiction between our spiritual and physical training. All the nuns have learned how to counter knife-wielding assailants and how to throw jabs at an attacker's throat and testicles. As part of our training, we soak our hands in our own urine to toughen the skin, and we let jeeps roll over us to harden our bodies. When I tried to visit a school in a small village two years ago, the people threatened me and I had to flee, but now I feel so bold that I can't wait to go back and threaten them. I will smash every hooligan I meet, break their bones, split their skin open, and bloody them generally. They will receive no mercy from me, though I shall still pray for my attackers, once I have disabled them. Praise the Lord." *(Eastern Express, 18-19/5/96. Spotter — George Adams)*

— ● —

● *"It's gone beyond dieting," Michael Hebranko told reporters as the outside wall of his New York house was demolished around him. "When you get to my size, nothing can be done. Life is hell."*

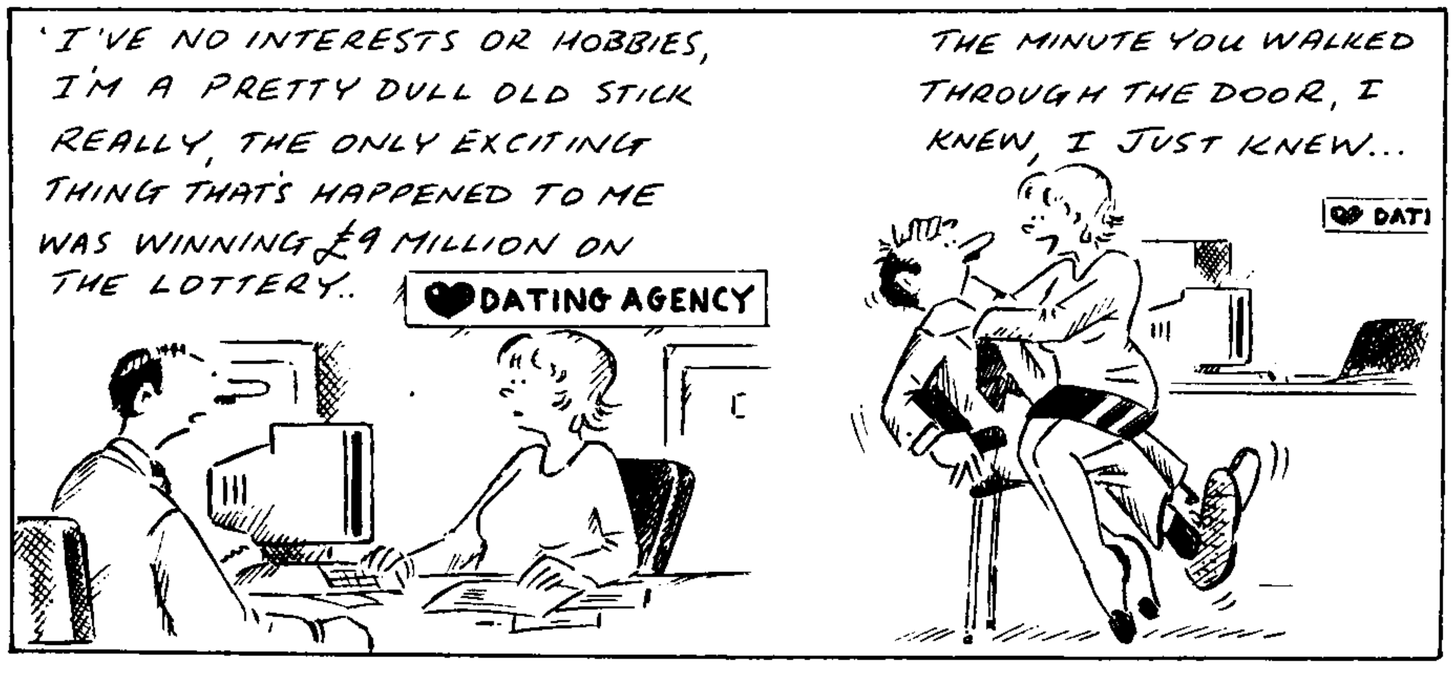
43-year-old Hebranko weighs more than 1,000 lbs, and workers were ripping a hole in the side of his house so that he could be lifted out on a fork-lift truck and taken to hospital. "Yes, I suppose it is ironic that I used to be the spokesman for diet guru Richard Simmons' Deal-A-Meal slimming program. I lost 700 lbs in those days, but two years ago I started putting it all back on, and more. I don't feel that I eat more than anyone else, but I suppose I must. Apparently, I'm the heaviest person on the planet at the moment, though there was a taxi driver in Seattle who died in 1983. He weighed more than 1,400 lbs, so things could be worse. It's the cost of replacing the lavatory bowls that's so crippling. I've gotten through 3 in the last year. They just don't seem to build them to last anymore." (The Leader-Post [Regina], 11/5/96. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

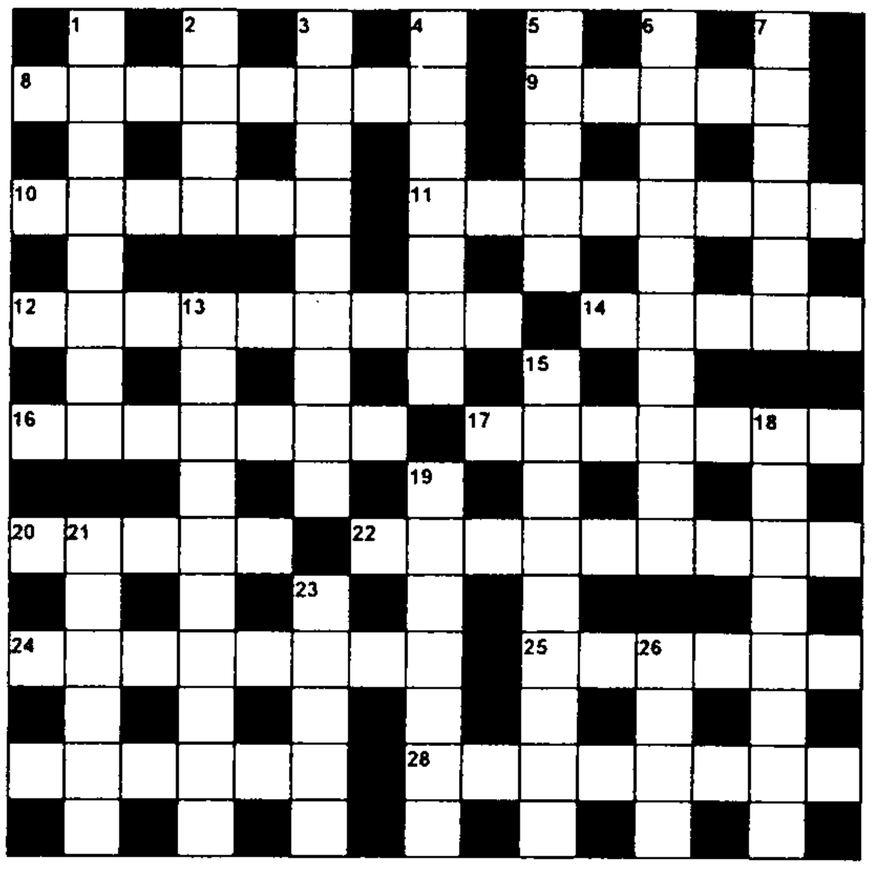
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


'I'VE NO INTERESTS OR HOBBIES, I'M A PRETTY DULL OLD STICK REALLY, THE ONLY EXCITING THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME WAS WINNING £9 MILLION ON THE LOTTERY..
DATING AGENCY
THE MINUTE YOU WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR, I KNEW, I JUST KNEW...
DATI

EYE CROSSWORD 55

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8 Maybe Emma Nicholson's become mentally unstable to a Conservative possibly (8)
9 Di, having no one, takes refuge in queenly address — conceited little bitch (5)
10 In pub mad cows sound swell (4,2)
11 Did rotten police work — was suited for it? (6,2)
12/19/6 In which we see to it that local graft gets its due recognition (3,6,7,10)
14 The thing with injecting heroin inside city limits, it gets you craving (5)
16 Appropriate Tory leader, Heseltine's first when it comes to sneakiness (7)
17 Swanky, as Brenda would say, means of getting about (7)
20 Backing Major, America accepts long decline (5)
22 The right journal as far as *Eye* readers are concerned? (9)
24 Going down on hill with a threesome lacking resistance (8)
25 Smears godless Paddy and co. (6)
27 Many soldiers (English) getting stiff (6)
28 Speculate about boozer whose chairman was briefly inside (8)

DOWN

1 Balls to tosser's success! (8)
2 It's a pig keeping neutral as an earnest broadcaster (4)
3 Lancashire offering a 50% Tory following is a potentially embarrassing issue (3,6)
4 Roger the journalist gets choked (7)
5 Dirty business getting second South African leader (5)
6 (see 12)
7 Jump one married old president (6)
13 A *Simply Red* composition infamously used as presidential campaign slogan (4,2,4)
15 Bland leader, right baloney — it's pisspoor and pointless (4,5)
18 Trendy canteen handy for the boozer (3,5)
19 (see 12)
21 Noel's House finally scrapped — he really screwed his company (6)
23 Politician more malleable than the Iron Lady? (5)
26 Dick gets up — in expectation of this? (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 21.06.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 54

Winner: R. Harvey

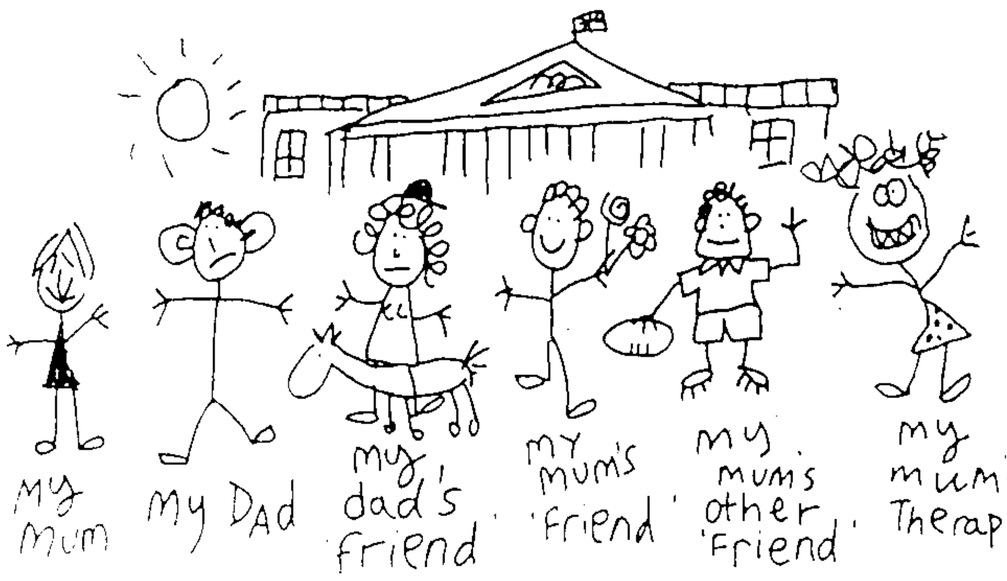
ACROSS: 7 Embryo 8 Dear John 10 Analyst 11 Al Gore 12/15 Champagne socialist 14 Clods 16 Agitate 18 Dorrell 20 Spasm 21 Espionage 24 Diktat 25 Tell fibs 27 Siberia 28 Stools.

DOWN: 1 Emma 2 Orgasm 3 Tory party 4 Editing 5/26 Papal bull 6 The Red Flag 9 Jugular 13 High priest 15 (see 12) 17 Test tube 19 Ashtray 22 No fool 23 U-turn 26 (see 5)

St Cakes

PRINCE'S ART GOES ON SHOW

by Our Art Correspondent **Brian R. Sewell**



by H.R.H. Prince William (aged 14)

WHAT was described as the most exciting new painting in the history of Western Art went on display yesterday at St Cakes public school in the West Midlands.

In an exhibition of Under-15s' painting and drawing, in the "Highly Recommended" category, the picture is the work of HRH Prince William, 14 (Hobnobs) and is entitled "The House of Windsor".

The work is described by art master Mr Lawrence Brownnose (Slade Dip. Failed) as displaying "astonishing maturity for someone so young. His young majesty has a mastery of composition and design, and is clearly destined to become the Rembrandt of his age, like his father Prince Charles before him.

"His subtle use of shading brings to mind the work of William Turner, whilst his brushwork can only be compared to Tintoretto. I would very much like to be invited to the Palace to tell his parents in person what a privilege it is to teach this genius and to kneel humbly before them to receive my knighthood. God bless Prince William! Floreat Cakeamus!"

Other exhibitions at the school include a selection of naked fourth-formers' bottoms, tastefully arranged in a row and shown to parents. The world-famous artists Gilbert and George OCs (Turds 1950-55) said: "We don't know much about arse but we know what we like."

There will also be a display of spontaneous violence, involving the beating-up of local yobs by the Cakes Rugby XV captain Peter Phillips (Bashers).

EURO 96 KICKS OFF

First Nigel Lawson — *NOW* The Kenneth Clarke Diet!

THE END OF POLLY POT?

by **Paul Dacre of the Daily Mail**

Pol Toynbee

THE world's most feared liberal commentator is believed to have been assassinated by myself in a 2,000-word bombardment in the Guardian newspaper.

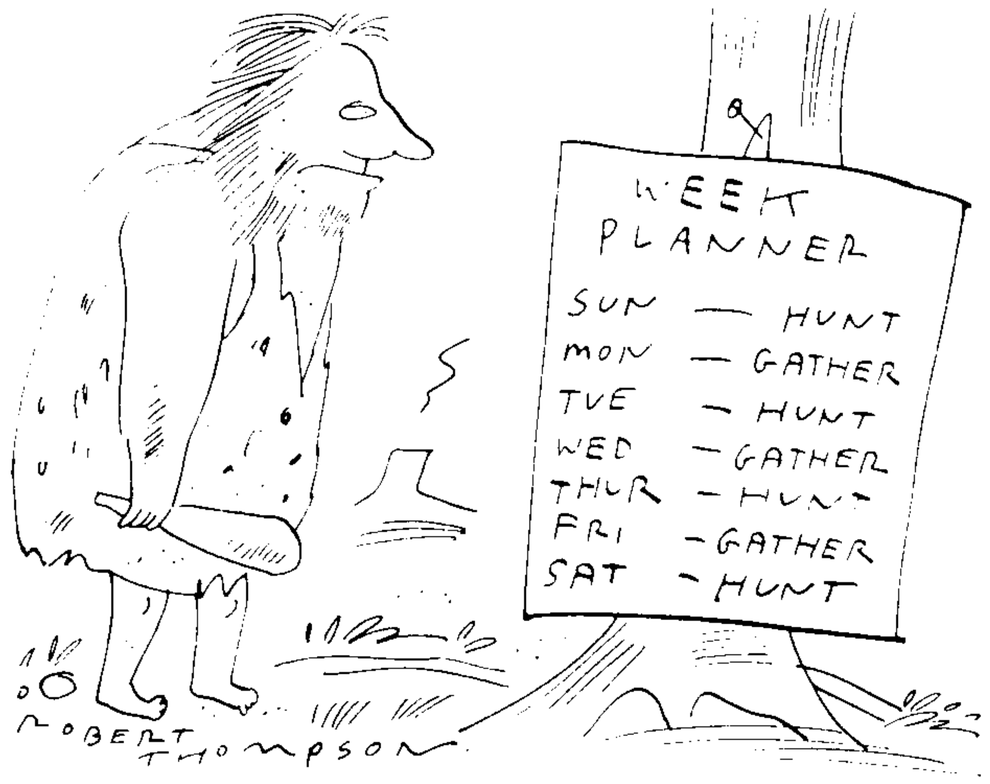
Her reign of terror at the Grauniad and then at the BBC lasted for twenty years.

And as recently as last week she sent shivers down the spines of married women everywhere who feared she might run off with their husbands — and then persuade them to get a quickie divorce of the type she advocates in her columns. Was she a legitimate target? I am asked.

Who cares? I went for it anyway. *(Continued in all newspapers ad nauseam.)*

ON OTHER PAGES

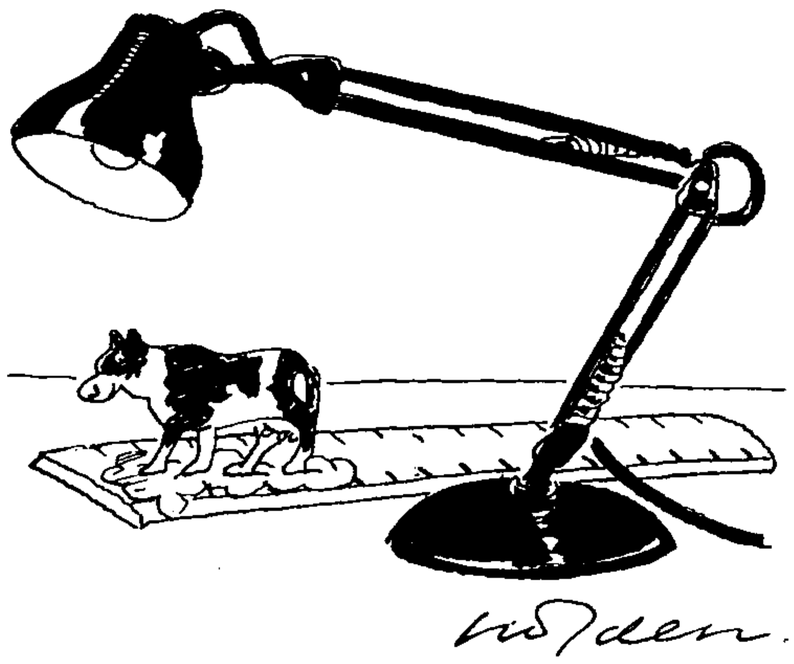
Tributes flow in 7
A Nation Mourns 9
Unfunny Cartoon by POT . 27



THE SECRET WAR DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR, Supreme Commander of B.E.F. (Beef Export Forces)

Monday

The war is going very well on all fronts. Today in my War Room deep below Whitehall we put a map of Europe on the table, and stuck little cows on the end of rulers, just like Mr Churchill used to do in the last war (except with boats and tanks obviously instead of cows). At the moment all our cows are massed along the South Coast in secret positions, waiting for my signal for when the ban is lifted and they can sweep across the Channel. Mr Dr Mawhinney had the brilliant idea of calling it "C Day" instead of D-Day. In



the meantime, Mr Freeman was able to report a whole string of glorious victories in our battle against our European allies.

1. Britain abstains in key vote setting Greek octopus quota.

2. Britain blocks the Harmonisation of Laws on Photocopying Directive, a pet project of the Portuguese trade minister Senhor Xavier Xerox.

3. British delegate deliberately falls asleep during debate on subsidies to Finnish Windfarms, thus bringing proceedings to an early halt at 3.26am.

And this is only the beginning of my campaign which, if necessary, we will keep going for hundreds of years.

Tuesday

I have decided to take a secret holiday behind enemy lines in a place called Cannes which is in France. I am travelling incognito as plain "John Major" and so far not a single person has recognised me. Today my wife Norman and I made a recce of the local butcher's shop, which are called "boulangeries", to see whether the French were eating beef. With the aid of my old school French dictionary I asked the manager: "Excusez-moi, mon bonhomme, êtes-vous vendant du boeuf?" At this he told me politely that he didn't sell any meat of any kind. I had not realised how bad things have got.

Wednesday

Today I had a very busy day. First I had to sack someone called Mr

TOP SECRET
Not to be read until 2096

Richards whom I had never heard of. Apparently one of the papers has said that he was having an affair with a dog lady, which of course is totally contrary to our principles of family values. As I told the Cabinet: "It is alright not to have an affair with someone, like I didn't with the cook. But it is not alright to have an affair with someone like this dog lady." The Cabinet looked very thoughtful at my very sensible words, and eventually Mr Heseltine asked: "What if someone like this friend of mine who is in the Cabinet is having an affair, but he manages to keep it out of the papers?" "Oh, that's alright," I said. "That's completely different."

Then Mr Arafat, who is the leader of the Palestinians, came to have his photograph taken and then stayed to lunch. We had planned to give him beef, but since so many world statesmen seem not to like beef, we gave him pork instead. Mr Arafat was very unhappy about his peace process. "It is all in ruins," he said, wiping his eyes with the towel on his head, "because the extremists won the election." "At least that cannot happen to my peace process here in Britain," I told him, without trying to sound too smug.

Thursday

Oh dear. We have just heard the results of the elections in Northern Ireland. They are as follows:

G. Adams (Guns For Peace/Sinn Fein) 16 percent

Rev. Mr Dr I. Paisley (Sod the Pope Unionist) 57 percent

D. Kneetremble (Official Responsible Moderate Sensible Unionist) 1 percent

J. Hume (Official Moderate Responsible Sensible Nationalist) 1 percent

Conor Cruise O'Booze (Red Faced Imitators of Paul Johnson For Peace) 1 percent

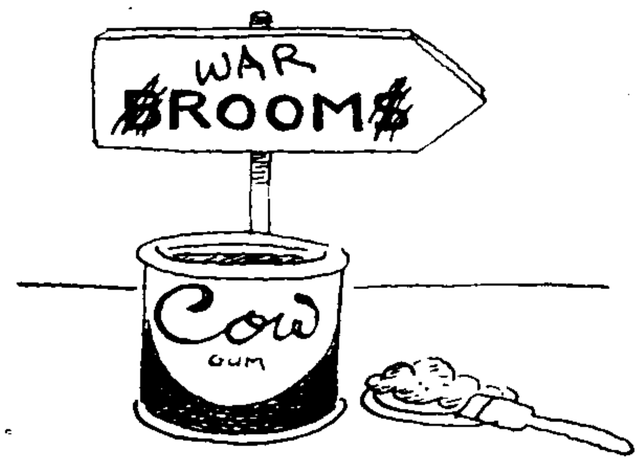
Mairead O'Feminism (Women Against Male Violence Alliance) 1 percent

Other Parties (370 in all) 4 percent

Under my very clever scheme, everyone will have a seat at the peace talks except Mr Adams. This way my peace process will continue. Of that, let there be no doubt. Oh no.

Friday

To keep the enemy guessing in the beef war, the War Cabinet has decided on a secret weapon. We are going to launch Mr Hogg round the capital cities of Europe on a "charm offensive". To show this on the map, we have sellotaped a plastic Batman from my Sugar-Frosted Shreddies on the end of a pencil, as we have run out of rulers. We told Mr Hogg to throw away his silly hat and scruffy mac, and to buy a new suit from Marks and Spencers, and whatever he does, he must smile at all times. "Why must I do that?" he said. "Because otherwise I will sack you," I said in my very stern, Churchill-in-1940 voice. "But I have not had an affair with anyone," he said.



Later we were very pleased to see Mr Hogg on the news walking up to Mr Santer in Brussels and slapping him on the back with the words "Guten abend Herr Kohl — how about lifting the ban so I can keep my job, ha, ha, ha".

Unfortunately, Mr Santer does not seem to have understood Mr Hogg's charm offensive, or rather he has only understood the "offensive" part of it, since he has issued a statement saying that he was sick of the "silly little English being xenophobes". He then explained that if the British policy was not to co-operate with Europe until the beef ban was lifted, his answer was simple. "We will not lift the beef ban until Britain co-operates." This is very good news because it shows that we have really got Europe worried. As I told the Cabinet, "Our slogan should be, 'Oh yes, it's hurting, even though it's not working'."

Monday

Today is a historic day for Northern Ireland as my peace talks begin. Mr Bruton and I went on television to distract attention from Mr Adams who was complaining about not being allowed in.

Unfortunately when we went into the talks he was still outside being filmed by the television people, which was in no small measure annoying.

There are 60 delegates from nine parties and two governments. There is also a Finnish politician, a Canadian general and an American senator.

With all this expertise round the table, I am sure we will be able to solve the immediate problems — i.e. where we are all going to sit.

TEARS AS ARIANNA BLOWS UP

by Our Man in Washington
Christopher Silvestopolos

SCIENTISTS wept openly as one of the world's most expensive high-fliers exploded into a million pieces yesterday.

The Anglo-Greek project Arianna was the result of years of research and development and billions of pounds of American money.

All this was designed to make the Arianna "take off" and "reach the stars".

Tragically, yesterday the dream died and the Arianna with a huge payload of Souvlaki, Dolmades and Baklava crashed to earth.

Mission controller Senator Huffington-Puffington III blamed a computer error.

"She went off course. She married me."

But he was not despondent. "This is not the end. It is just the end." *(Shurely 'beginning'? Ed.)*

Bernard Levin is 83.

Top toff school in Gay Sir TV row

by Our Education Staff
Lunchtime O'Boys

PUPILS of the £1,500-a-week top Midlands public school St Cakes *(motto: Facimus Excellentis-simi Cakeani — "We make exceedingly good Cakeians")* **were last night furious after failing to spot any of their staff in the annual "TV's Mr Gay Contest" on BBC2.**

Said one outraged fourth-former, Yossim Amrolliwallah: "Not one of the St Cakes teachers was on television in leather shorts — what kind of a public school does St Cakes think it is, when it cannot run to a single gay member of staff in the finals of the country's most prestigious homosexual event?"

Cross Head

In a statement issued late last night by St Cakes headmaster Mr R. Kipling, he apologised to parents, saying: "This disgrace for St Cakes will not be repeated. Next year I can promise that we will be employing a number of young homosexual members of staff to ensure that St Cake's can once again hold its trousers up high."

Jason Donovan is straight *(shurely '29'? Ed)*.

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam: Dr Timothy Leary LSD

So. Farewell
Then
Dr Timothy
Leary.

Sixties guru
And advocate of
Mind-Expanding
Drugs.

"Turn on,
Tune in,
Drop out."

That was
Your catchphrase.

Keith says
Now it should
Be
"Drop Dead."

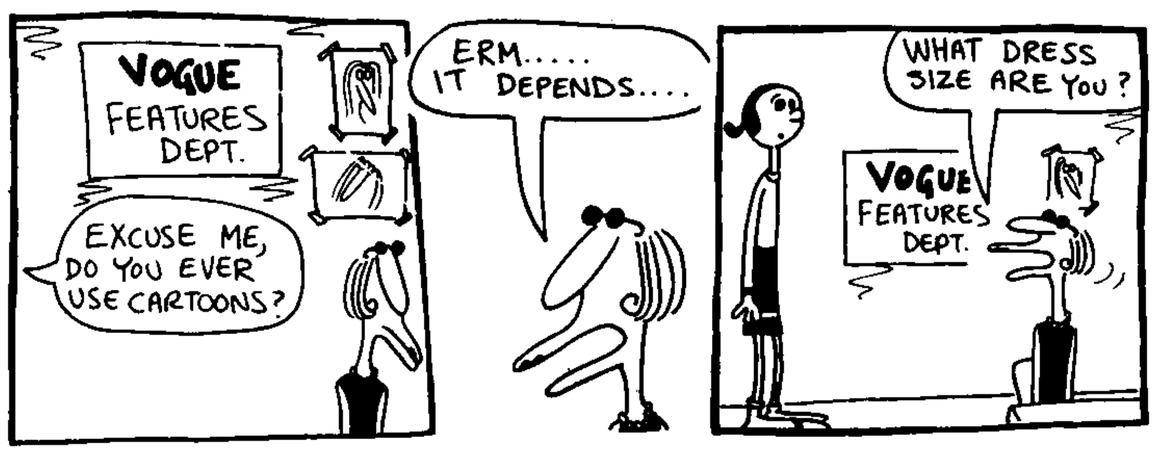
Personally I
Think Keith
Has dropped
Too much
Acid.

M-a-a-a-n.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE HAVING TROUBLE TELLING THE DIFFERENCE

A PIECE OF SHIT

A DEFENCE OF CAMELOT'S PROFITS

Every week we have to handle over £70 million and put it into our bank account.

That means setting up a very large bank account to put all our money into.

This means spending over three hundred man-hours counting it all up.

It means carefully selecting ourselves as the recipients of the £70 million.

It means being on the make *(shurely 'ball'? Ed).*

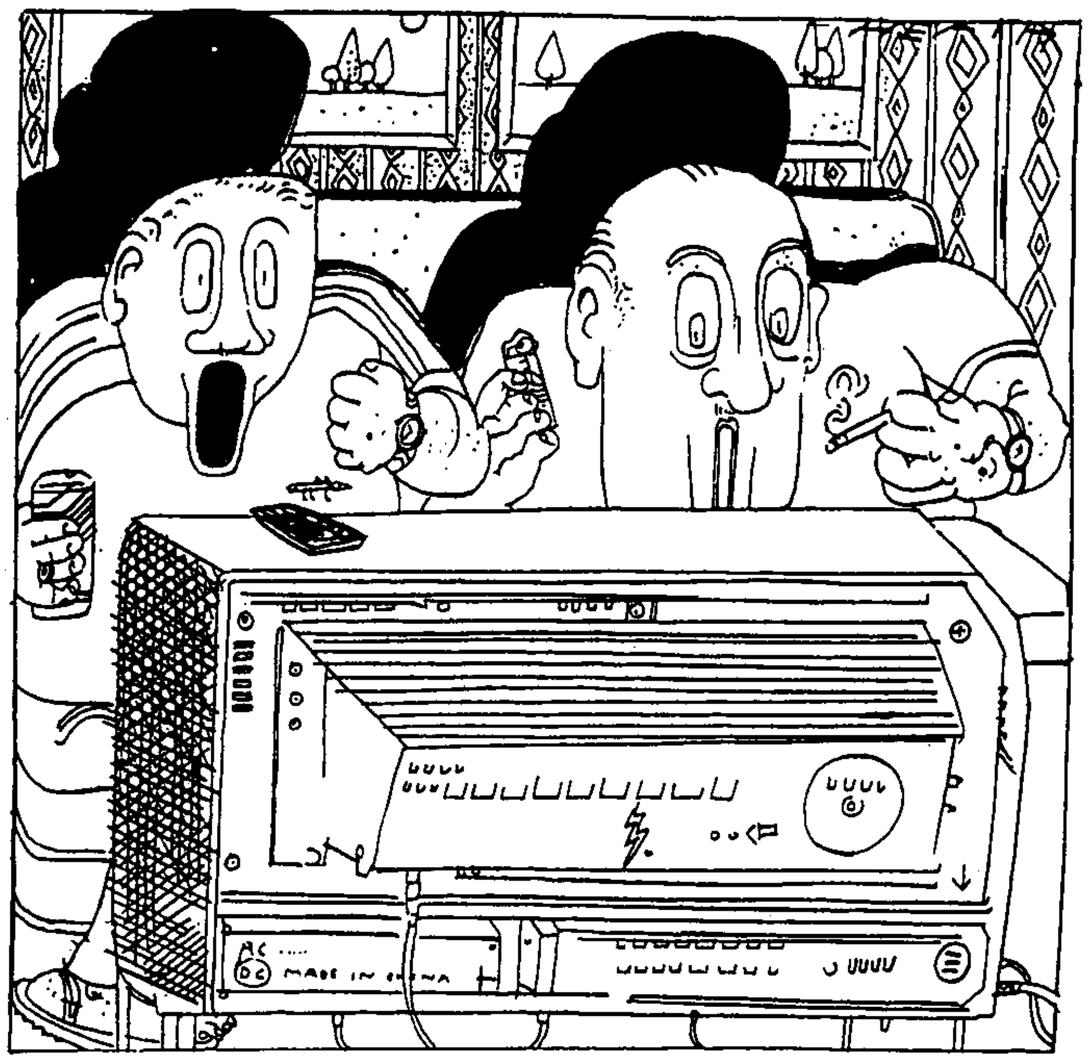
We had less than six months to pull this off — and we have!

Put it all together and it means creating a fortune from nothing and then turning it into the biggest bank account in the world.

A piece of shit? You're dead right.

CAMELOT

BRINGING OURSELVES THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PROFIT



Great Bores Of Today.

"... Go on go on! man on! man on! oh no! oh god! go on! go ***ON***! oh Jesus wept! there's a space there... look there's a space oh no! wrong way... there's a man square yes! yes! nice one quality cross ***YES! YES! YES!*** beautiful ball! ***YES! YES! GO ON MY SON!*** oh! ***NO! NO! NO!*** penalty! ***PENALTY!*** he hasn't given it! bloody ***TWAT!*** oh no! ***NO!*** ... *(continues for 90 minutes)*"

THE BOOK OF BENJAMIN

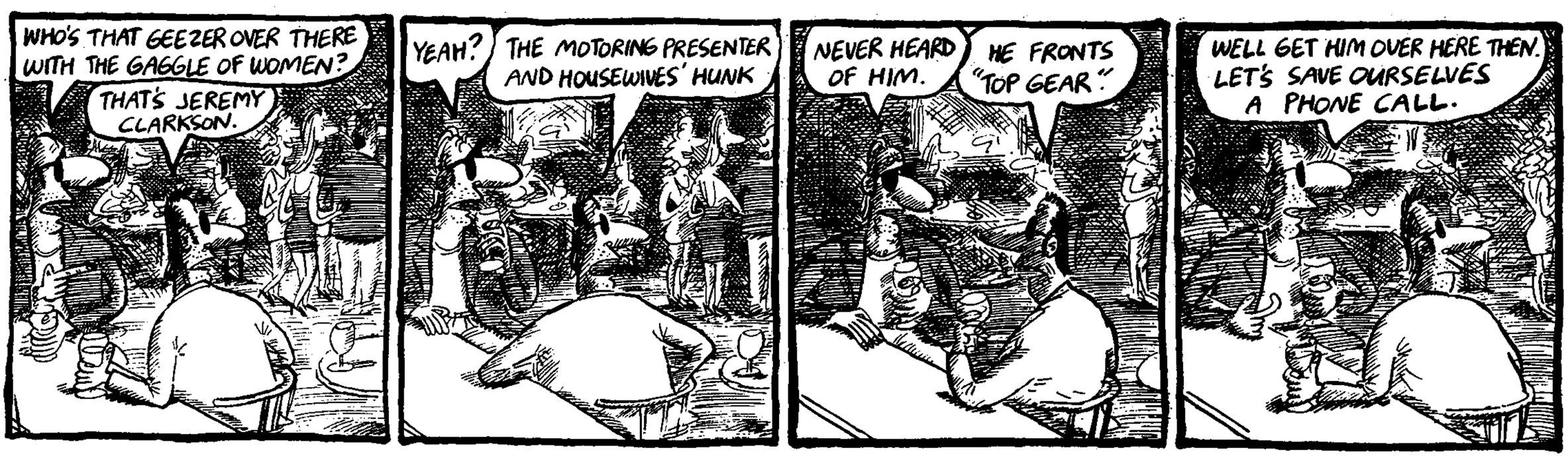
Book One

1. Here beginneth the Book of Benjamin, son of Net-an-yahu.
2. For these are the generations of those who have ruled over the children of Israel by smiting the Ara-fites, the Hezboll-ites, the Hamas-ites and all the other Ites.
3. Begin begat Shamir and Shamir begat Sharon.
4. And Sharon begat Rabin. But Rabin was a man of peace.
5. And Rabin spake unto Arafat and said let us go up, even unto the place they call Wash-ing-ton, where dwelleth the one that is called Clint-Stone.
6. And thus began the process that is called peace.
7. And the lion lay down with the porpentine, and the turtle gave suck to the cockatrice and the smiting cameth to an end.
8. But then, lo, it came to pass that Rab-in was slain by one of the children of Israel who yearned after a bit more smiting.
9. Then the children of Israel turned unto Simon, son of Per-es, who like unto Rab-in pursued the ways of peace.
10. But when the elect-ion draweth high, Per-es took counsel and the elders spake unto him saying: "Verily Simon, Son of Per-es, thou slippeth behind in Mori Poll, that is so-called after Morris that cometh from Po-land.
11. "Therefore, gird up thy loins, go forth and smite the Hez-boll-ites that dwell in the land of Leb-an-on. For this way the children of Is-rael will see that you can smite like the best of them."
12. So Per-es went forth and carried out the smiting, even as it had been foretold. And among the women and the children of Leb-an-on there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth, even unto the sons of Un, which look-eth on and do nothing about it.
13. And Per-es saw the smiting and said: "Surely now the children of Is-rael will choose me, for if it is smiting they want, I am their man."
14. But the children of Is-rael were wiser in their generation than Per-es could know. For they said: "Anything Per-es can do, Net-an-yahu doeth better".
15. And so it came to pass that Ben-jam-in, Son of Net-an-yahu was chosen to be ruler over the children of Israel.

(To be continued)

Celeb

LIGGER


WHO'S THAT GEEZER OVER THERE WITH THE GAGGLE OF WOMEN?
THAT'S JEREMY CLARKSON.
YEAH?
THE MOTORING PRESENTER AND HOUSEWIVES' HUNK
NEVER HEARD OF HIM.
HE FRONTS "TOP GEAR".
WELL GET HIM OVER HERE THEN. LET'S SAVE OURSELVES A PHONE CALL.

VOTE CONSERVATIVE

Daily Mail

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1996

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 35p

DON'T VOTE LABOUR

LOOK OUT—THE LOONY LEFT IS COMING

by Our Political Staff SIMON HEFFERLUMP

FOR too long so-called New Labour has managed to hide behind Blair's big smile and self-styled "new moderation".

But today the Daily Mail can exclusively reveal, from secret documents leaked to all newspapers from Labour's Walworth Road HQ, that the old Labour is very much alive and kicking.

Two of Blair's closest and most trusted henchmen have blurted out the terrifying truth of the Socialist nightmare that is about to engulf Britain.

Firstly, left-winger David Blunkett revealed his crazed blueprint for dragging Britain's schools back into the 19th century.

If voters are stupid enough to entrust their kiddies' futures to this bearded fanatic, he would:

- **bring back traditional teaching methods based on the 3 Rs;**
- **sack all progressive and incompetent teachers;**
- **insist on educational standards comparable to those elsewhere in the world.**

Then came the second bombshell from the out-of-control Trotskyite extremist fringe that is the hidden face of Blair's New Labour.

Drawing on ideas that were last fashionable in Stalin's Russia, law-and-order fanatic Jack Straw called for:

- **a return to strict parental discipline over children;**
- **kids to be forbidden to roam the streets getting drunk and vandalising property after 9pm;**
- **longer sentences for juvenile rapists and murderers.**

Is there no end to this insanity?

The Daily Mail predicts that if Red Blair and his Commie cohorts ever get their hands on the levers of power, we could all be in for the following:

- **lower taxes;**
- **a return to capital punishment;**
- **a fully privatised health system;**
- **the M25 to be widened to 50 lanes;**
- **Lady Thatcher to be given a job in Cabinet.**

Is this the Britain you want your children to inherit?

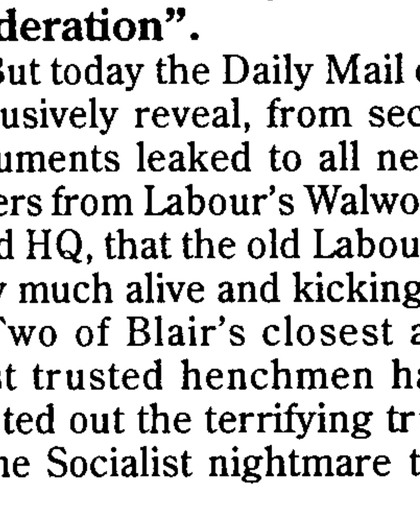
Then make sure you are not hoodwinked by Bolshie Blair, Beardie Blunkett and Stalinist Straw.

Late News

Trendy Blair smacks innocent children — what a Trot! 7

boreo-96

SIX TO WATCH!



ENGLAND

Eddie "Himmler" Bulldog of Millwall first pulled on the National Front jersey at Utrecht in the famous England v. Holland scrap in 1983. Eddie can use both feet and is quick with a broken bottle.

FORECAST: Will not get beyond Day One before he is arrested.

GERMANY

Hans Punshchupp of Munchen-Notgladhesbach. Perhaps the most experienced international soccer hooligan of the whole competition, Hans has appeared in courts all over Europe since 1969. His

fellow-countrymen have awarded him the Iron Bar With Cross for his performances on many a battlefield.

FORECAST: Could be back in Germany long before competition starts.

HOLLAND

Jan Van der Vandal, the Terror of Eindhoven. At 19 Van der Vandal has a formidable reputation as the most feared striker in the game. He has already struck 49 shop windows, 124 parked cars, 76 riot police, two prosecuting counsel and 1 Greek judge. Not for nothing is he known as "the Demon of the Dykes".

FORECAST: Rain over all parts of England, clearing later. (That's enough Six to Watch. Ed.)

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S HERCULE POIROT IN

THE MYSTERY OF FLIGHT CX251

ADAPTED FOR TELEVISION BY CATHY PACIFIC

THE STORY SO FAR: A Jumbo Jet aircraft has been vandalised on a routine flight from Hong Kong to London Heathrow. Passengers on board include the England Football Team, in whose compartment the damage occurred. Who on earth can have done it? Poirot is called in by the FA.

(Silly music. Vintage car pulls up outside England training headquarters at Bisham Abbey. Two men get out and walk to front door. Cut to hallway)

Poirot *(for it is he)*: So, 'astings. Zis is ze famous 'ome of Eenglish football?

Hastings: English hooliganism, if you ask me.

Poirot: But I am not asking you, 'astings. I am asking Monsieur Venables. And, if I am not mistaken, 'ere 'e is!!

(Enter shifty-looking middle-aged man putting brown paper bag into his training shorts)

Venables: I didn't do it. Honest. It wasn't me.

Poirot: I, Hercule Poirot, will be ze judge of that. N'est-ce pas?

Venables: It's a fair cop!

(Venables leads the way to the drawing room, where 22 men in tracksuits are sitting uneasily)

Poirot: Gentlemen...

Hastings: Hardly.

Poirot: Thank you, 'astings — I am responsible for ze jokes!

Venables: That's no way to talk about my lads!

Poirot: Messieurs! I have gathered you here together to solve ze mystery of ze smashed television sets!

(Poirot stares at each of the players in turn)

Poirot: Someone here is guilty of a mindless act of violence which has made your country ze laughing stock of ze entire world.

(Poirot looks at blond-haired man asleep on pile of beercans)

Poirot: Monsieur Gascoigne — perhaps you know ze identity of ze culprit?

Gazza: Burp!

Poirot: Or Monsieur Ince?

Ince: Non parlo Inglesi.

Poirot: Or Monsieur McManaman?

All: Our solicitors will be issuing a statement. Until then we have been advised to say nothing.

(Poirot sits down wearily shaking head)

CAST IN FULL

Hercule Poirot	TERRY SCOTT
Colonel Max Hastings	TERRY-THOMAS
Terry Venables	TERRY WOGAN
Paul Gascoigne	TERRY CHRISTIAN
Ball	TERRY MAJOR-BALL
TV	TERRY VISION

Poirot: So, ze trail 'as gone cold, 'as it not, 'astings?

Hastings: Surely someone must know who did it?

Venables: *I* know who did it.

(There are gasps from everyone in the room)

Poirot: Would you care to enlighten us as to their identity, Monsieur Venables?

Venables: Yes. They *all* did it!

Hastings *(slowly)*: I see. So if they *all* did it, then no one has to own up, and then no one has to take the blame and then the whole squad get off scot-free!!

Venables: Clever, eh? Who said my team doesn't have any tactics?!

Poirot: Excellent! Ze end of another case!

Gazza *(waking up)*: Another case? Mine's Newcastle Brown!

(Cut to exterior where England squad are vandalising Poirot's priceless car. Silly music)

EVERYONE TO BE COMPENSATED FOR EVERYTHING SHOCK

by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rosenbeard**

QUEUES formed outside every court in the land last night, following the news that a number of *policemen* have won the National Lottery for having been on duty during the Hillsborough disaster.

Among those groups demanding billions of pounds in compensation for suffering Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome were:

● 217,000 amateur gardeners who had suffered "severe stress" and "hurt feelings" over the failure of their petunias to bloom due to the cold weather in May.

● Mrs Ethel Gumbridge of Nuneaton, who had bought a tie for her son George, who didn't like it. "I suffered a chronic attack of Hurt Feeling Syndrome," she said. "I can still see the look of horror on his face as he opened my parcel."

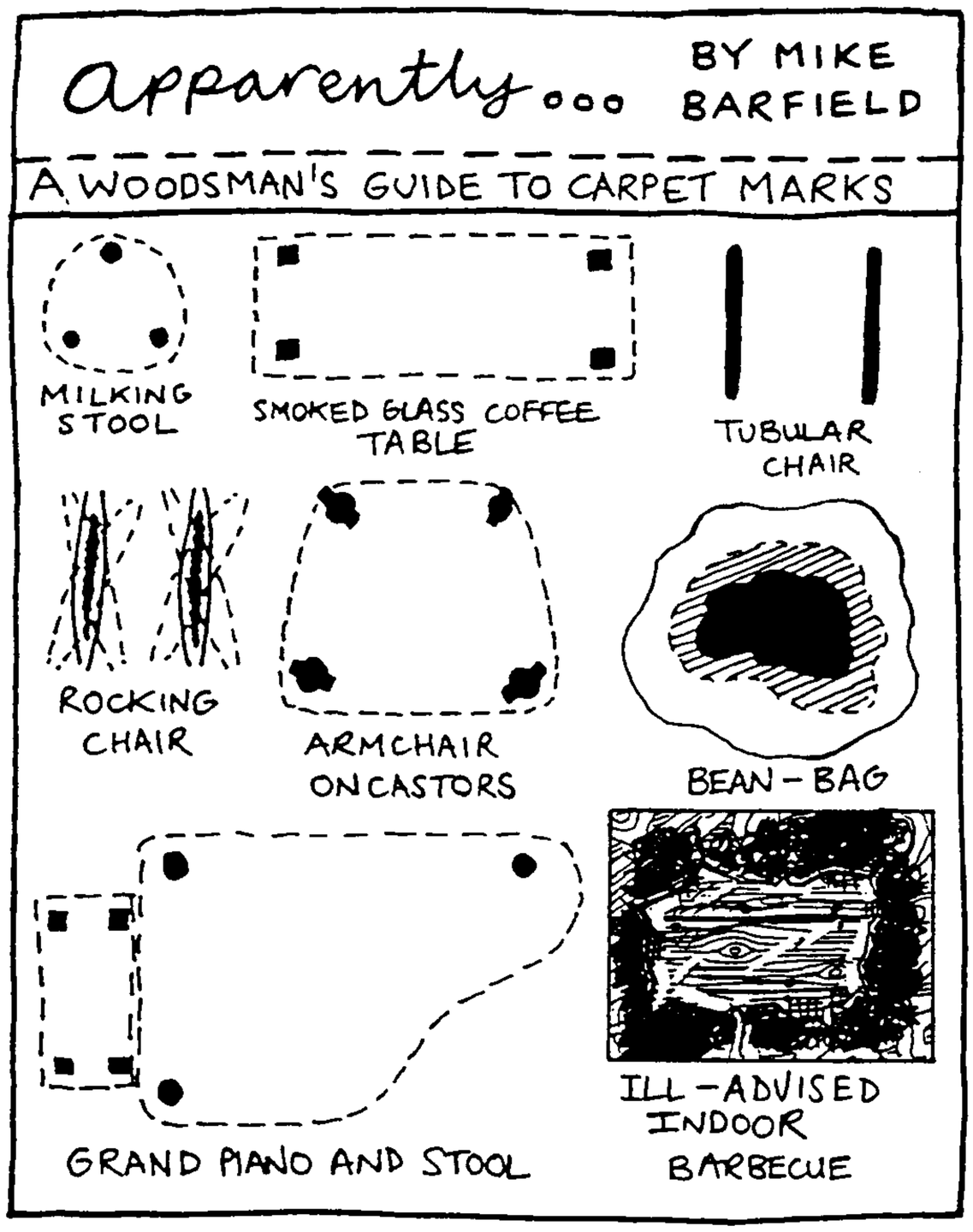
● Mr Ron Cumberpatch, who is blaming the government for distress caused by running out of toilet paper on a Sunday, and being unable to purchase a new supply owing to archaic trading laws.

● The directors of Camelot plc, who were "deeply upset" at the public reaction to their bonus awards. "All we did was pay ourselves the rate for the job," said Lottery boss Tim Holley, "and everyone was really horrid to us. I cried and cried."

● 500,000 scientists who suffered "humiliation, disappointment and deep shock" at the sight of their space rocket blowing up at a cost of £2000 billion.

● Sarah, Duchess of Ferguson, for the "very real humiliation" inflicted on her by the Royal Family in taking away her title of HRH. "I suppose they want me to be called Her Royal Lowness," she bravely quipped, as she broke down in hysterics at the stress of talking about her compensation claim.

● Mr Paul Gascoigne, for the trauma of being himself.



From The Referendum Bunker

Achtung!

Referendum Bulletin No. 94

So, Mr Bond, you have been thinking that I have been very quiet, but that is when I, Jammy Goldsmersh, am at my most dangerous.

You have made the mistake of under-estimating me, Mr Major. You said I would never come up with the perfect question for the Referendum.

Well I have bad news for you! Ha ha ha ha!

(He strokes white Lady Annabel Birley on his lap. Huge telescreen rises from fishtank at back of room. Projected on it are the following words: "Do you or do you not think that should the possibility arise sometime in the future of the people of Britain being offered the choice between a European federal superstate or an independent sovereign nation, with the right to renegotiate our Maastricht opt-outs with regard to monetary union and the...*")

So beautifully simple, is it not, Mr Major? Yet this simple device spells the end for you and your government.

Even now thousands of my highly-trained killer canvassing teams are stopping old ladies in the street and asking them this question.

Your days are numbered, Mr Major. Goodbye.

(Sir Jammy Goldspectre climbs into monorail and disappears into underground cave stacked to the roof with emergency supplies of Marmite)

Issued by the Referendum Party of Great Britain

c/o Box 5051, Marmita, Mexico.

**The text of this question is copyright to the author, W. Cash MP.*

CONTROVERSY OVER FAWSLEY AWARD

by Our Arts Staff **Brian R. Sewell**

THE ART world was rocked to its foundations yesterday by the news that the prestigious annual Lord St John of Fawsley Award for the most ridiculous and self-important figure in the world of the arts had been awarded by the panel of judges (Chairman Lord St John of Fawsley) to Lord St John of Fawsley.

Defending his award of the prize to himself, Lord St John told listeners to *Fenland Round-Up*, the prestigious Cambridgeshire-based hospital radio show: "I was the obvious candidate to win this prize. It is quite ridiculous to say that it should have gone to anyone else. I have all the qualities that as a judge I was looking for. I am pompous, smug, self-regarding, vain and extremely silly. Even my name is laughable."

Lord Dijon of Moutarde is 84.

"It's my mobile"

DIARY

JEREMY CLARKSON

7.00hrs GMT. Dream on, baby. Blimey! The alarm goes like stink. It's a truly ugly son-of-a-bitch, with zilch exterior styling. It's jangling in my lug'ole as I try and snatch my fair share of winks — forty at the last count, to be exact.

Next to me, my dishy bird — and, believe me, I'm not talking of the feathered variety here — snoozes fit to bust. I've had this little lady for a good few years now, and let me tell you this — she's holding her value in a highly competitive market. Her exterior styling is a world-beater, and she's got as much vroom in her as a model half her age. I know what you're thinking, you're thinking — Clarkson, you're one helluva lucky bloke. And let me tell you this, mate — if that's what you're thinking, you'd be too damned right.

8.15hrs GMT. Honestly, I really am. Yes, sirree, as our American cousins put it. I really am slipping my feet into a pair of brand new all-male shoes. And you know what? They fit me like a woman.

And a sassy blonde eighteen year old chick at that. Revving up for a full-scale walkabout in the old bedroom, I hit the ground at over 4mph, with still plenty of give in the heels and a good deal of interior styling around the toes. Believe me, these are shoes that can really *walk* — and then some! I take them up to a full throttle 4½mph on the straight, then misjudge the turn and go crashing into the bedroom mantelpiece, hitting a china ornament — yeeeowww, smaaaash! Doff a good smack of the old elasto-plast on my forehead, and then it's hard on the accelerator for a totally exhilarating walk down-stairs. Yup, if these shoes were topless go-go dancers in a Northern nightclub, they'd be expecting you to meet them in the bar afterwards for one helluva moonlight cocktail — plus cheesey nibbles!

8.30hrs GMT. Rocket into the old kitchen for a hastily-snatched snackerooni for breakers with all the horsepower and mid-range thump you could ask for. Wallop the bread into the toaster, wait for the wires to go red hot. Then hotter. And wait. Come to my senses — boy, is that toast burning! Pile my way through the smoke, grab it out, floor it onto the plate, butter its underside, jam it all over, and zoom it all the way down the old Brand's Hatch. You wanna know why? Your wish is my command, señor. Because it's breakfast and because That Bloke Clarkson is as famished as a well and truly very, very famished young lady in a foreign clime. And how does it taste, this jam on toast for breakfast? You really wanna know? Fan-bloody-tastic, my friend!

10.15hrs GMT. I don't know about you, but me — I expect a bit of wear and tear out of my shoes. And power too. And not just power but raw power and more power, untamed power like you've never seen it before. Tell it like it is, Clarkson, baby. These shoes walk me to the shops in record time, and thus walk their way into my personal all-time great shoe hall of fame. You betcha they damned well do. These brogues have got real class, like 36D bosoms on a young millionairess sipping a Campari and Soda in downtown Cannes. Say what you like about rubber soles — and believe me, many have — but they grip the pavement like a treat, they've got the tread to take a Vietnam-style pounding, and they're still coming up for more after a very brisk walk to the newsagents. Beat that if you can, matey.

13.45hrs GMT. So finally I get to do a bit of your actual straight-up-and-down honest-to-goodness steady-as-she-goes your-place-or-mine motoring. It's the new Bluebeard HRT that's waiting for Clarkson today, and from the look of her she's positively raring to go, like a Dutch airhostess, brunette, hair done up in plaits, full lips, pert as hell, who's been stuck on trolley duty since Bangkok.

You ain't seen nothin' yet. Oh boy. You can say that again, mate. In my twenty-year career in motoring, I've never seen nothin' like this babe. Let me tell you this, if this car was a woman, she'd be on her back and gagging for it before you could say Peugeot CDM.

I lollop hard down on the shaft-neck, strike the fuschia into suction, drag on the marrow-bone and before I know it I am clocking up fifty aspidistras on the zimmer. Slam on the foot-stool, into third and then it's easy on the old scrofula. The underwench is looking good, the V-neck is great, and one glance at the thrombosis tells me the entire Preston Candover is pure state-of-the-art.

Into fourth, and it's basting the turkey all the way. The grasshopper's pulling on my left leg, the scavenger is coming along nicely, and all that's between me and the road is the well-cooked sprout. Boy, is this one hell of a sexy gerbil!

I'm up into fifth now, giving it the full aspirin, and the baby's mewling like a woodlouse. Heavy on the camiknicker, and she's taking the corner like a bantam. You can forget all that stuff about the antelopes, because this lemon-squeezer could shuffle a six-pack and still have change for a scarecrow. Phew — and to think I might have left my duck-warbler in the snuffle-shank.

18.23hrs GMT. Ankle into a pit-stop to hammer my way through a sandwich. For those of you not up on the technicalities, that's two slices of bread clamped together with some sort of filling between 'em. For me it's every bit as tasty as a sixteen year-old Thai belly-dancer smeared in peanut-butter, dancing to a song by the great Chris de Burgh. Grab a lager, zip the wattle into garnish, motor home.

22.30hrs GMT. In bed with the Missus, I do what a guy's gotta do — and how. I raise the vexed issue of whether the McLaren BSE compares favourably with the Ferrari UB40, or whether either can compete with the superior flexi-gobbing of the Jaguar CJD. But the lovely little lady chickens out, and by the time I've finished putting forward my side of the great debate, she's gone to sleep. And that, for me, is the real beauty of motoring — it's a man's world. And me? I'm all man.

"Right. No one must lose face"

THAT $1 MILLION DOLLAR FERGIE BOOK IN FULL

★ It's Big! ★ It's Expensive! ★ It hasn't got a title! — And that's just the Author!

Chapter One

I shall never forget the day when Her Majesty said to me: "You can't put anything interesting in your book or you will be hanged for treason."

As always, my former mother-in-law was right.

The End

© *Fergie the Helicopter (UK) plc*

Literary Review

Dogged Scottie

Ecstasy
Irvine Welsh
(Cape, £9.99)

CRITICS. Now what does Mr Irvine Welsh, the celebrated young (38-ish) author of *Trainspotting*, *The Acid House* and *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, think of critics? A recent interview in *Q* provided an aperture into the great man's mind: "All reviews are the same, just a string of adjectives followed by 'great' or 'crap' or whatever."

Or whatever. This indifference to punditry is all the more creditable in Mr Welsh's case as the reviewers just *love* him. Literary society gets younger by the minute, of course, but does anyone remember the gouts of enthusiasm lavished upon James Kelman and Roddy Doyle back in the days before everyone realised how single-gear it all was?

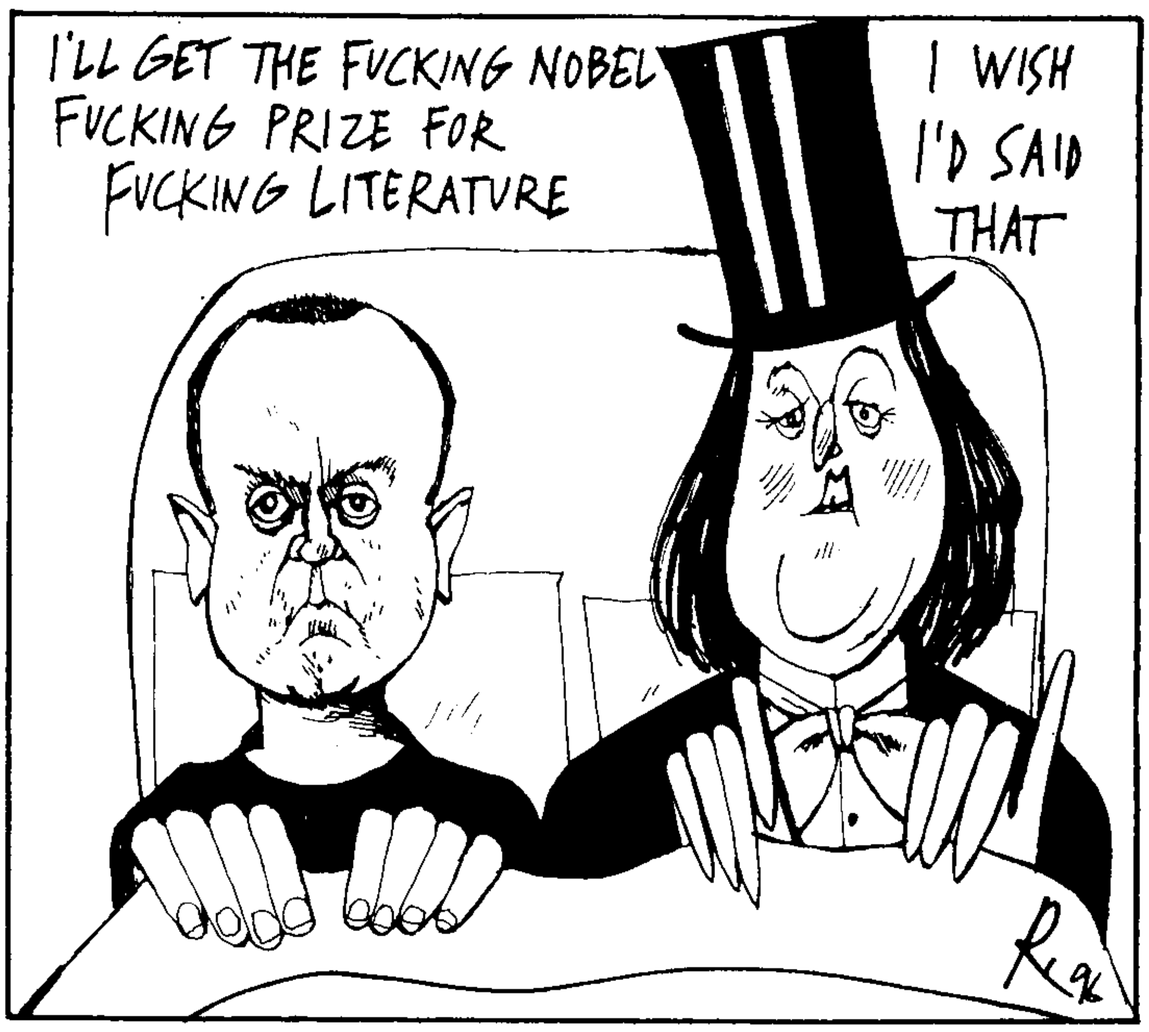
Well, here it is again: the illuminating spectacle of ageing southern public schoolboys taking up acres of space in the posh prints to acclaim "skill, wit and compassion that amount to genius" (*Sunday Times*); "a pure writer, producing staggering feats of storytelling" (*Independent*); "the most gifted of the younger writers working in Britain today" (*Guardian*).

Oh dear, oh dear. Scots patois and heaps of swearing, yoof culture and all, you just can't go wrong with it, can you; and all over literary London well-bred young men with aspirations are kicking themselves that they weren't born with Irvine Welsh's disadvantages.

He isn't much cop, of course. Oh, there's a joke or two, and the Pictish monologues ("Ah am fuck well fed up" etc etc) are amusing for a while — say for half-a-dozen pages — but there's nothing in the way of characterisation and the plot proceeds via hulking road signs. *Ecstasy*, the new one, is a trio of novellas — "Lorraine goes to Livingston", a repellent tale of revenge starring a nurse, her romance-writing patient, latter's porn-fixated husband and a necrophiliac TV personality; "Fortune's Always Smiling", which is — never mind, let's just call it another repellent tale of revenge; and "The Undefeated", in which drug nincompoop and married straight girl explore "the true nature of house music".

Much of what follows, inevitably, is more or less incomprehensible. Thus: "That was me para as fuck, but no as para as Nuke. Something was bugging the cunt bigtime. Ah knew that Nuke wasnae so intae the casuals these days, but he still got it together for the odd big swedge." Ah, they'll be setting these in the translation paper for Oxbridge entry in a year or so.

The odd thing about it, perhaps, is the faint didactic air. Welsh is a bit of a chemical philosopher in his way, and so we get an excruciating justification of the collective right to party ("It was the only way. It was your duty to show that you were still alive. Political sloganeering and posturing meant nothing: you had to celebrate the joy of life in the face of these grey forces and dead spirits who controlled everything...") not to mention sex tips for casualties ("Es are mair sensual than sexual, but you've got to have the nitrate though, man, not really an optional extra, now really as essential as a cock or a fanny like").



A sense of strain hangs over much of the proceedings: not merely the strain of having to account for characters who have no thoughts in their heads and bedrock speech capability, but a growing awareness that Welsh is a bit tired of it all. Never mind the pastiche romantic novel bits in "Lorraine goes to Livingston", by the time we get to "The Undefeated" Welsh forgets he's James Kelman's grandson and goes all formal on us, dropping plummy formulations like "a tense, dutiful love" and "She had the fatigued, irritated air of a young woman who had seen more than she should..." in among the "Too much of this shite can fuck a cunt's heid" etc etc. Elsewhere in the *Q* interview, Welsh indulges in some moody speculation about his future career: "If I got to the stage where I was given literary prizes it would be just fucking horrendous," he suggests. Relax, Irv, you're safe.

Books & Bookmen

■ HOW should newspapers review books by staff writers? In the case of *Aids: The Failure of Contemporary Science. How a Virus that Never Was Deceived the World*, written by *Sunday Times* medical writer Neville Hodgkinson, the answer is: put the boot in.

In doing so, the paper has disowned completely former editor Andrew Neill's obsessive crusade to prove that Aids was not caused by the HIV virus. For buried inside the *ST* on 2 June was a review of Hodgkinson's book; and the reviewer, former *New Scientist* editor Bernard Dixon, wasted no time in noting that publication "follows a campaign, waged principally [by Hodgkinson] in the *Sunday Times* between 1991 and 1994, challenging the expert consensus that Aids is caused by a virus (HIV), that it threatens heterosexuals as well as homosexuals and that there is a serious epidemic in Africa".

Dixon recalled that Hodgkinson had been "repeatedly attacked by both scientists and journalists", not least over reporting that could endanger lives by undermining health advice designed to reduce the transmission of HIV. "Two years ago," he continued, "Hodgkinson left the paper and went to a retreat centre near Oxford where he 'soon re-established peace of mind'."

Dixon's review was a fair but effective demolition job on Hodgkinson's coverage of Aids. But where does this leave the paper for which the author writes? For a start his "peace of mind" was not exactly helped by the bizarre appearance in the paper of a long article by one Liz Hodgkinson about the sexless nature of her marriage to, er, Neville Hodgkinson. Apparently the *ST*'s sub-editors hadn't realised that they were related, and so the first the author knew about the piece was when he opened the paper and discovered that his bedroom secrets were being shared with millions of readers.

☐ THE bitter dispute between the ministry of defence and those retired members of the SAS who want to cash in with their biographies, novels and film scripts has left one man unscathed: dynamic publisher and Robert Maxwell survivor, John Blake, boss of Blake Paperbacks.

While some criticise Peter de la Billiere, and others slagged off Andy McNab or Jack Ramsay, Blake has quietly shifted thousands of hardback copies of something called *The Nemesis File*. This remarkable book — which claimed that the SAS bumped off loads of Catholics in Northern Ireland without the victims' families or even the IRA noticing their demise — remained in the Bookwatch top 10 for a couple of months after publication.

But from the MoD, SAS or even Sinn Fein it has attracted nary a word of criticism — for the simple reason that its "ex-soldier" author was never in the SAS and his story is complete tosh anyway.

'Bookworm'

O·B·N

AT the next election there will be four leaders of serious national parties: John Major, Tony Blair, Paddy Ashdown and Sir James Goldsmith. Of the four, Jimmy Goldsmith is by far the richest, the most formidable, and probably the cleverest..

WILLIAM REES-MOGG
The Sunday Times

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
HIS IDENTITY HAS TO BE KEPT SECRET FOR HIS OWN SAFETY
THE SOLDIERS' STORY
HE'S THE IDIOT WHO TURNED DOWN THE SAS BOOK
THE SOLDIERS' STORY

footnotes

THE IRRESISTIBLE FALL OF ROD THE ROD

FROM the northernmost tip of the pier at Rhyl in his constituency to the southernmost of the valleys, Welsh bells are ringing in universal jubilation over the sleazy downfall of Rod Richards, former parliamentary under secretary at the Welsh office.

Richards's outstanding characteristic was his arrogance, which he developed as a young man when he signed up for the security services. From 1977 to 1983 he worked with military intelligence in Northern Ireland. This background helped him to a prime job with the BBC in Wales for which he was not "boarded" as ordinary applicants were.

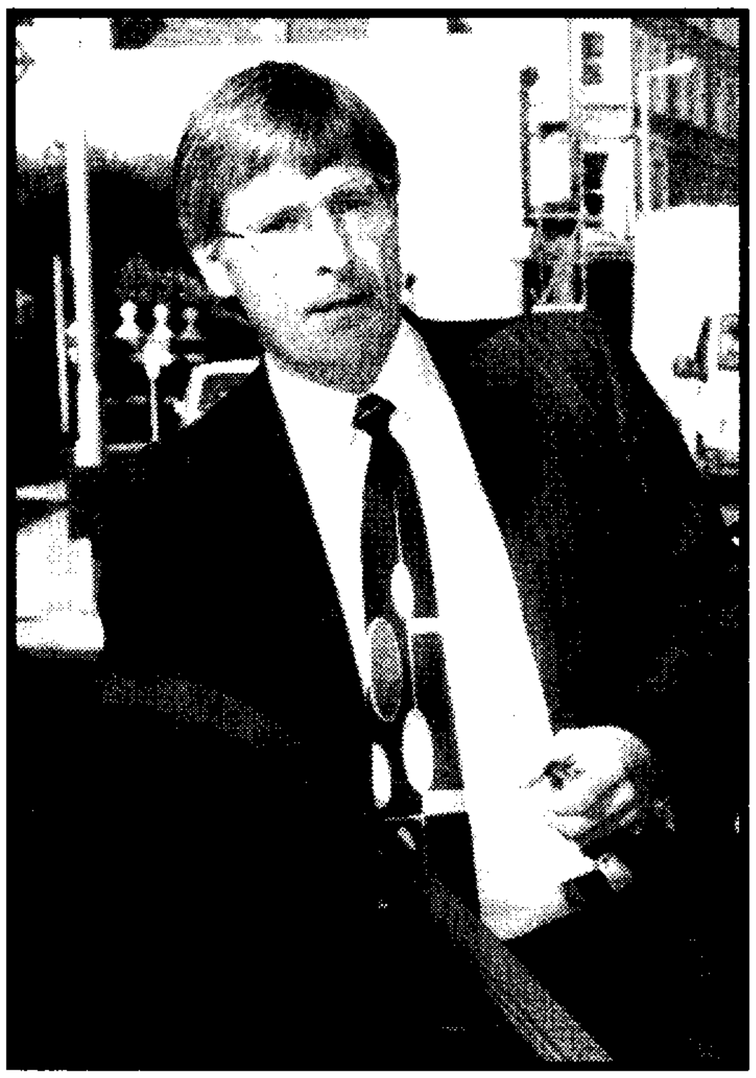
Taking the Vale

For several years after 1983 he read the news in Welsh. He insisted that he was, like all good newsreaders, politically non-partisan. So his BBC bosses were rather surprised when he was selected to fight Carmarthen for the Tories in the 1987 general election. After the election (in which Carmarthen went from a marginal to a safe Labour seat), Richards signed an undertaking that he would no longer devote himself to politics — and BBC bosses reluctantly gave him his job back. Imagine their surprise, therefore, when he became the Tory candidate in the by-election for the safe Tory seat of Vale of Glamorgan in May 1989. When Richards lost in a landslide, the BBC told him to look elsewhere.

Piranha dished

He was broke, and the Tory party took pity on him. It made him a political adviser to the then Welsh secretary, David Hunt, and put him on a couple of quangos. He tried his hand at private enterprise. In April 1990 he joined the board of Contemporary Design Systems, a Luxembourg-owned firm which sold "anti-terrorist equipment". He lasted seven months and left the board in November. In July 1992 he joined the board of Piranha Pictures (sic). He lasted seven months, and left in February 1993. After that, the company slid into deeper and deeper debt and filed no more accounts until it was dissolved in 1995.

He had even less success with his pub, the Ynyscedwyn Arms at Ystradgynlais, near Swansea, which he bought soon after leaving the security services. In 1985, a local builder, called in for routine repair work, uncovered drains gushing illegally into an underground stream. The builder did the necessary repairs, but Richards wouldn't pay the £3,000 bill.



HOW DO I GET OUT OF HERE?

The result was a long court action which ended in 1989 with the builder winning £20,000 compensation and costs - and some harsh words from the judge about the pub's management.

Like all good entrepreneurs, Richards applied for help from the state. In the summer of 1989, he asked for a grant from the Welsh Tourist Board, which was funded by the government he was advising. The Board stumped up a generous £16,592.

In 1991 Richards tried without success to sell the pub and eventually managed to lease it. The tourist board could have insisted he pay back the entire grant at once, but it took pity on him. It generously postponed to January 1995 the date he had to start payments. The tourist board won't tell the *Eye* the terms, which it describes rather oddly as "confidential", but 18 months later he is still paying back the grant.

By 1992 Richards was proving the old Welsh Tory adage that nothing succeeds like failure. In the general election that year he was elected MP for Clwyd North West. In the Commons he delighted his party's rat-pack with his brilliant invective. He called Peter Hain a liar and (after at first denying he had done so) had to apologise. He called all Labour Welsh councillors corrupt, and had to apologise for that too. But it was his way with women which earned him the universal detestation of journalists, especially female ones.

Swordsman of the valleys

There is hardly a woman journalist in Wales who has not been stunned by Richards's certainty about his sexual prowess and attraction. One political journalist made a formal complaint to her editor about Richards's bovine insistence on being invited to her flat and not leaving when asked. Another journalist managed to rid herself of Richards with some difficulty before making her way to her flat, only to have her window showered with gravel thrown up at it by the determined under secretary of state.

Only one group of people sustained its belief in Richards's ability: the government. The more he shocked civil servants, journalists and Welsh voters, the more he was patronised and promoted by John Major and his ministers, who are now ruefully picking up the pieces.

Fitting Patten

Remember John "Nutter" Patten the former education secretary who campaigned so fanatically up and down the country for schools to opt out of local council control? .

At a fringe meeting at the Tory Party conference in 1993, Patten had them dancing in the aisles with his promise "to eat my hat garnished if the majority of secondary schools are not grant-maintained (opted out) by the next general election".

Oh dear. In Oxford, where "Nutter" is an MP and in Westminster, where he lives with his family, a strange gulping noise can be heard on dark nights. It is the sound of "Nutter" garnishing his hat and eating it. With less than a year to go to the election, about 84 pet cent cent of secondary schools are still under council control. Since Nutter's promise, only 74 secondary schools have voted to opt out, while 92 have voted against. One of the most surprising recent results was at St Vincent de Paul primary school at Westminster, London, where parents voted 139-55 against opting out. The ballot is secret, so no one can tell how John Patten, father of Marie Claire Patten, 9, a pupil at the school, cast his vote.

EX-FILE POPS UP

■ THE police complaints authority (PCA) has performed a dramatic U-turn in the long-running case of John Gorman, the man who claims he was persecuted by a dirty tricks campaign after making two complaints about the state of British Airways food. A new investigation has now been set up a few weeks after an old one resulted in no action.

Mr Gorman first complained to the PCA three years ago that officers from Heathrow police station had taken part in the campaign against him. An inquiry was set up under officers from the Metropolitan police area — which includes Heathrow.

In August last year Mr Gorman was told no disciplinary charges would be brought. He attacked that decision in a series of long and angry letters to the PCA's Linda Cawsey. At the end of March this year he was told, finally, that nothing would be done, that the matter was closed and that the PCA had "no authority to re-open the investigation".

On 17 May *Eye* 898 castigated the 'Police Cover-Up Authority' for dropping the Gorman case when it had the clearest possible proof that police officers *had* taken part in dirty tricks against him. A week later, on 24 May, the PCA announced a completely new inquiry "to investigate the circumstances surrounding documents material to Mr John Gorman's complaint which were not available to the original investigation".

This time the inquiry will be carried out by an officer from an outside police force, Det Supt Fred Ashmore, of Thames Valley police. Unlike the old inquiry, this one will be "supervised" by a senior PCA member, Mr Tony Williams. What brought about this amazing U-turn?

A PCA spokesman told the *Eye* that a sergeant involved in the original inquiry had been asked to "check some details" arising from a letter from Mr Gorman. The sergeant had gone to the Metropolitan Police solicitors' office where he stumbled across "a file of working papers which the PCA were not aware of".

The worthies at the PCA were rather peeved that vital documents which had not been disclosed in two years of investigation had all the time been sitting around in the Met solicitors' office. So at last they took the Gorman investigation out of the hands of the police force he was complaining about.

Eye readers will be delighted with the assurance from the PCA that the sudden and miraculous discovery of documents in the police lawyers' own offices had nothing whatever to do with the last *Eye* article — and was certainly not the result of an anonymous tip-off from inside the police or British Airways of the type that has repeatedly revived this strange story whenever it seemed about to die.

Doctor of Flaws

■ St Andrews University, breeding ground for so many distinguished Thatcherites (MacGregor, Forsyth, Fallon etc etc) has honoured another "one of us". In a ceremony later this month, retired Judge Suzanne Norwood gets an honorary degree, a prestigious doctorate of law.

Not every Scottish university alumnus joined in the cheering. Nicos Paparodopoulos, of Heriot Watt University, was up in front of Judge Norwood at Isleworth Crown Court, London, in 1987. Charged with obtaining money by deception, he vigorously pleaded not guilty, claiming he was framed by two brothers he was tutoring. The case depended on his credibility. He said he was "of good character". To his and his lawyers' surprise Judge Norwood warned the jury to be "cautious about the amount of weight you give" to that plea. After all, she observed, "we are all of us born into this world without previous convictions". The jury promptly convicted the young man, and Judge Norwood sent him to prison for 18 months.

Nearly ten years later, in March this year, Mr Paparadopoulos's appeal crawled to the High Court. The court lost no time in quashing his conviction "because of the inadequacy of the judge's direction". The young man's good character was central to his credibility, and therefore "the summing up of the learned judge was plainly defective". The judges also noted that in two similar cases, those of Berrada and Marr, the same Judge Norwood had made the same crass mistake, and in both cases the convictions had been quashed.

OF GOOD CHARACTER: Judge Norwood

It is hard to imagine anyone more suitable to be Doctor of Law at St Andrews University, (except, possibly, Timothy Clifford, the director of the National Galleries of Scotland and prodigious medal-collector - see last two Eyes for the amazing details - who gets his doctorate on the same day).

Suffer the little children: 2

■ The more the scandal of serial abuse in state homes for young people is exposed, the more fretfully the government walks away from it.

Until now, the national press has concentrated on Clwyd, North Wales (see Eyes 895 and 896). Peter Garsden, a Cheadle solicitor, tells the Eye he represents 93 clients all of whom have proved they were abused in homes in Cheshire and Liverpool. An enormous police inquiry in which more than 2000 former inmates of the homes have been interviewed, has led so far to six major convictions for buggery and indecent assault on boys at the homes. The six got a total of 60 years in prison. Four other cases from the same homes will be heard in the autumn.

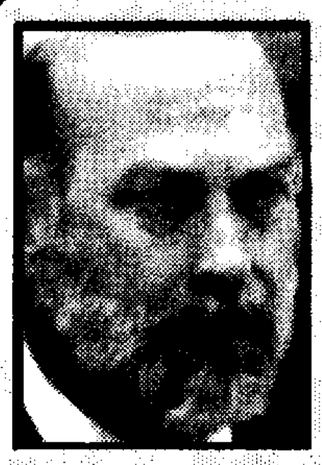
Mr Garsden is amazed at the complacency of the authorities. The police on Merseyside, where most of the serious offences took place, will not help him with information. Even more incredibly, the department of health consistently duck his demands for a public inquiry.

He tells the Eye: "The one thing all my clients have in common is a strong desire to make sure that what happened to them can never happen again. They all want a public inquiry and recommendations which will cut out for ever the secrecy, isolation and slack supervision which made all this possible."

On November 2 he wrote his first letter to Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, demanding a public inquiry. Back came the reply from a civil servant on December 20, saying there could not be a public inquiry while "criminal proceedings and police investigations are continuing". Of course, replied the solicitor, but what he wanted was a commitment to hold a public inquiry once the cases were over. The same civil servant wrote back on January 30 blandly repeating her previous point in exactly the same language.

On April 3, Mr Garsden tried again. This time he enclosed an appeal for a public inquiry by Judge William Wickham, the Recorder of Liverpool, after he sentenced one of the main abusers, Edward Stanton. Another civil servant wrote on May 7th with exactly the same brush-off as before.

Mr Garsden cannot believe it. "Awful abuse was rife on boys in care in homes across a city and two counties. How do we know this isn't going an all over the country?"



PRINCE GUZZLING

Most businessmen enjoy free lunches but for Prince Michael of Kent they are the main source of income. The Sunday Times disclose documents from the American PR company Burston-Marsteller about an approach in 1994 from Prince Michael, the Queen's cousin.

The Prince reckoned he could boost the PR company's business by hosting a series of "receptions, luncheons and dinners in the UK and overseas". The company snapped up the offer. The Prince was paid £3,500 a lunch. Burston-Marsteller announced that they had established "a working relationship with the royal family", and wealthy businessmen flocked to its lunches.

Had Burston-Marsteller done any research into what happened in previous cases where the Prince was hired to host lunches? In 1989, Prince Michael was on the board of a dodgy insurance company called London United Investments. The company was in desperate trouble from charging absurdly low premiums, and, to recoup some hot money, launched a subsidiary in the United States. Its main agent there was a Chicago underwriter called Dick Foss. Foss proposed a series of lunches and receptions for top people hosted by the Prince, and was astonished at the response. "People rang up from all over the city saying can I come, can I come?" he said.

London United Investments went bust in 1990, owing £9 billion.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

ONCE the smoke has cleared from the dismantling of Stephen Hinchliffe's shortlived high street empire, the assorted receivers and administrators are likely to turn their attention to just what happened to the £250 million a year that flowed into and out of Facia's 850 shops.

For if the Hinchliffe history is repeated a fourth time, it will emerge that while creditors may have been suffering Sheffield's tycoon wannabe has been feeling no pain. At Facia — as at James Wilkes, Lynx Holdings and En-Tout-Cas/Bukta before it — life for Hinchliffe was one long party. The question now to be asked is: who was picking up the tab?

Just how Hinchliffe personally affords his "*Dallas*" lifestyle has never been clear. It was one reason he left Wilkes and Lynx. Expenditure on non-core items and rumours of unauthorised loans for non-company purposes may give a clue. (There is no truth in talk that Lynx "helped" to buy a star player for Sheffield United — director: S. Hinchliffe.) So too do the incestuous inter-company relationships between Hinchliffe private companies. No doubt the receivers will be examining the Facia books for any signs of inter-company loans or management fees.

The curious role of United Mizrahi Bank (UMB), which appointed receivers KPMG and Grant Thornton, also needs some explanation. UMB's increasing concern in recent months and its decision to pull the plug are not unrelated to the departure of the bank executives who first backed Hinchliffe. A year after its London branch began a £10 million romance with Hinchliffe, the Israeli owners sacked the two men who had effectively agreed the Facia facility — a facility which, amazingly, required no personal guarantee!

The 1995 sackings were due to large unauthorised loans. The Facia loans were authorised. But why they were authorised is a matter which has since been exercising the bank and the private investigators hired to probe its problem loans. These inquiries have discovered grounds for suspicion about what was happening inside UMB and why a strictly religious bank should be lending on a large number of non-kosher deals.

Hinchliffe clearly learned by his ejection from Wilkes and Lynx in 1992 to stay away from running public companies with their tiresome requirements for filing accounts and disclosure of director's dealings as well as the ability of other shareholders to end the game. Hinchliffe stayed private, keeping his activities in the shadows along with the financial lowlifes (bankrupts, struck-off solicitors) who claim to act for him.

The spend and burn pattern at the Shoesave shop chain, tennis court supplier En-Tout-Cas and sportswear makers Bukta was repeated at Facia as Hinchliffe moved without missing a beat from the collapse of all three companies to the launch of his latest venture.

Shoesave, En-Tout-Cas and Bukta were down or out when Hinchliffe moved in. The first two were given away, the last sold by receivers. But it became very clear very quickly that Hinchliffe had little idea how to run the businesses whose finances deteriorated at speed. Lenders and creditors soon discovered a slowness to pay and lack of information about the companies. Late or non-filing of accounts became a Hinchliffe hallmark.

By 1994 the game was up. First Shoesave then En-Tout-Cas and Bukta folded. But not before our hero had disappeared behind the smokescreen of the sale of the dying businesses to purchasers who were quickly revealed as fools or rogues. But the smokescreen, provided by either little known buyers or offshore companies of unknown ownership (unknown that is to those other than Hinchliffe), enabled him to deny responsibility. That smokescreen is soon to be blown away by the Department of Timidity & Inaction, which is seeking to ban Hinchliffe from being a company director over his actions at En-Tout-Cas where he paid off his own borrowings and burned the creditors.

One of the mysteries at Facia is why — given this so recent history — banks, major companies like Sears, Courtaulds, C&A and Signet, and fund managers Murray Johnstone were prepared to do business with Hinchliffe? The answer would seem to be that he gave them what they wanted — the opportunity to remove failing businesses with large liabilities from their balance sheets.

As UMB, Sears and other creditors put the squeeze on, Hinchliffe moved to repeat the disappearing trick he had carried out two years before. Enter through the smoke and mirrors, Texas American Group, controlled by a convicted conman (John Carway), fronted by a bankrupt (William Grosvenor). Had the deal gone through the cash-poor TAG was in no position to rescue Facia. But instead of being at the wheel when the crash happened, then — just as three times before — Hinchliffe would have been able to claim: nothing to do with me. What he had not counted on was the impact of the DTI's action which began the avalanche before he could step aside and leave Carway, Grosvenor and other Facia directors to take the fall.

KIWI cad Bryce Taylor, the gym owner who sold photographs of the Queen of Hearts building up her compassion muscles, has had another result — this time at the expense of shareholders in his company, L.A. Fitness.

The company was promoted by Johnson Fry in 1989 as a business expansion scheme tax avoidance vehicle for top rate taxpayers. Some 70 investors put in £371,500 to buy shares at 100p each just as the recession hit. Even before the Princess Di caper in 1993, which forced Taylor's exit as a director, L.A. Fitness was in poor shape. Three years of losses had been followed by a mere £3,000 profit. The next two years produced more losses.

All of this was double bad news for the BES investors who had to hold their shares until October 1994 to qualify for the tax break. Johnson Fry have now come up with a rescue package — an offer of 9p a share, a loss of just, er, 91 percent on their investment, from C.S. Leisure.

However, it is not so bad for the nifty Bryce who injected an initial £100,000 in 1989 and then obtained an 80 percent stake in return for a further £30,000 in a deal sanctioned by Johnson Fry as the only alternative to insolvency shortly before the photos row. Angry L.A. Fitness shareholders calculate he has walked away with more than £150,000 for his shares after helping wreck the business.

"Where there's mud, there's brass."

THE GUSH of excitement generated by the *Sunset Times* and *Sunday Hellograph* about the planned £2 billion flotation for Harrods failed to mention one possible reason for preferring a Wall Street quote.

It is hard to see the stock exchange here accepting the phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed as a fit and proper person to be the chairman-director of a London listed company after he was branded a liar and a cheat by the DTI inspectors. They found he had deceived City regulators over his background and finances when taking over House of Fraser in 1985. He was also considered by the Bank of England unfit to run the Harrods Bank. Then there is the little matter of Mohamed and the Tory MPs. No doubt American regulators will be less picky.

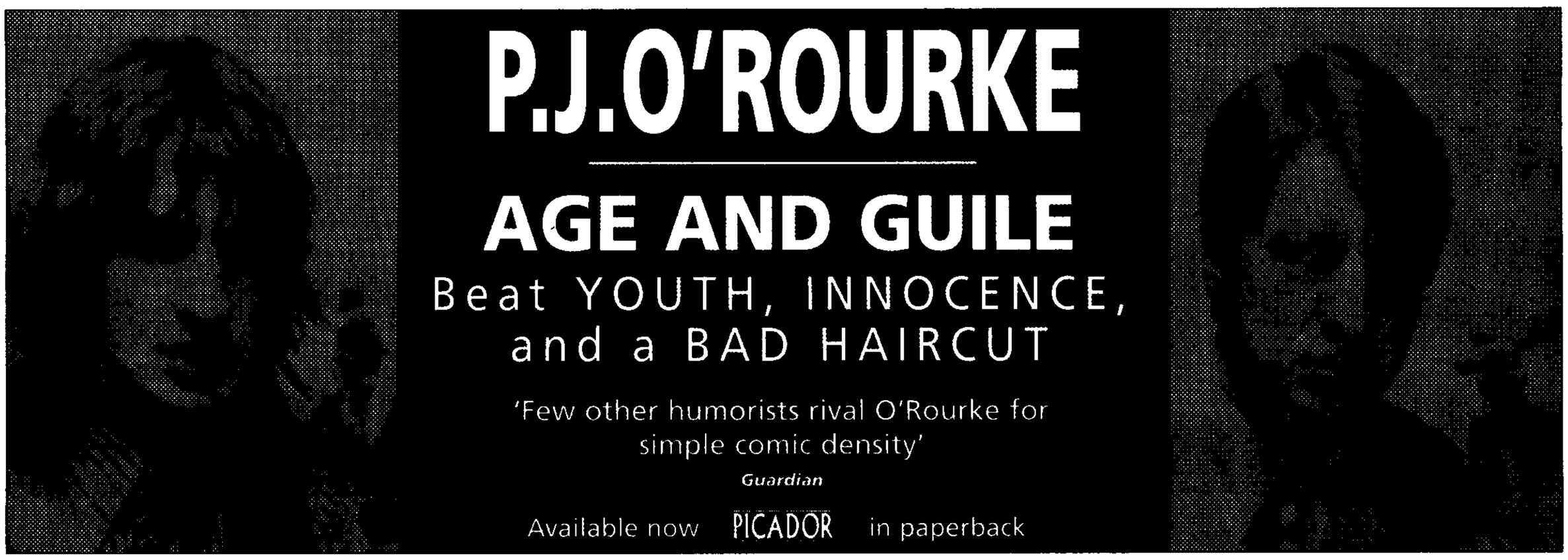
THE Harrods story was the latest evidence that, despite the huffing by the takeover panel and the stock exchange, the weekend puffing of imminent deals by the *ST* twins gets more, rather than less, blatant.

As well as the Harrods story both papers also "revealed" that W.H. Smith was about to pay Boots £50 million to take away the Do It All chain. This completed a remarkable hat-trick. The previous week (2 June) both papers shared another "scoop" — the threatened departure of David Lloyd from the leisure company he sold to Whitbread. And the Sunday before that the shared "exclusive" was that ScottishPower was to bid for Southern Water.

Clearly the Friday night-Saturday morning PR drop is alive and well with the Sunday papers' that financial PR men believe must be kept sweet to fawn over their clients when required — despite panel rules about the stock exchange being the first to know.

The "drop" is a key move in preparing the City for good or bad news. So any inquiry will discover blank amazement on the part of all concerned that two supposedly rival newspapers uncovered the same confidential information simultaneously.

'Slicker'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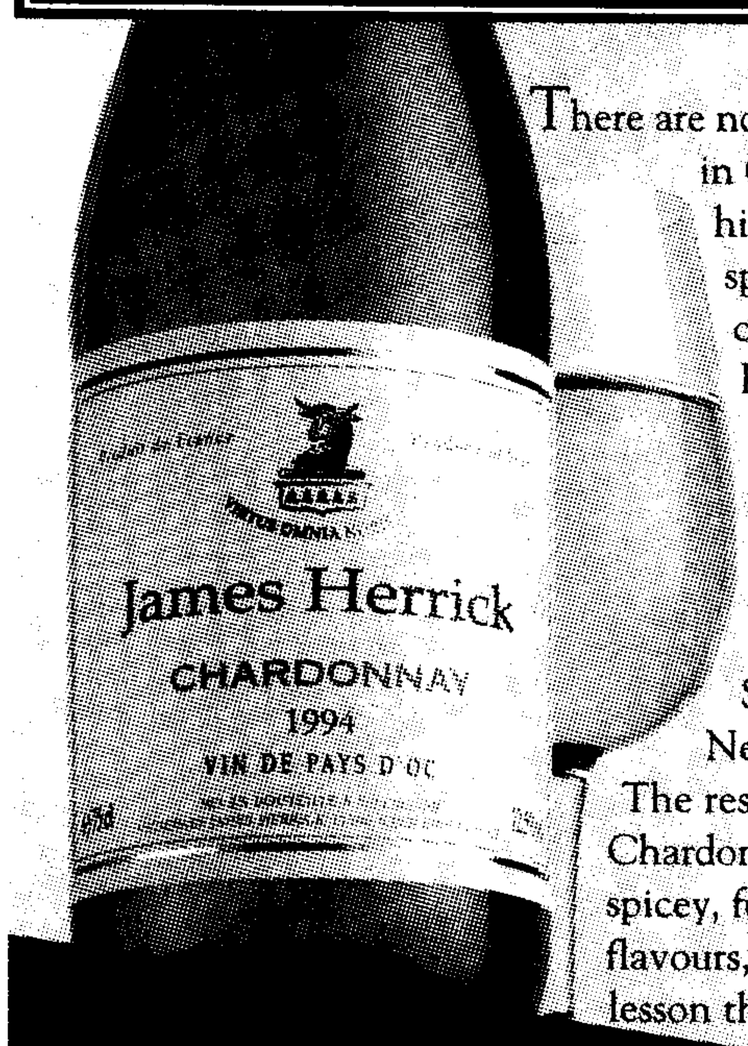

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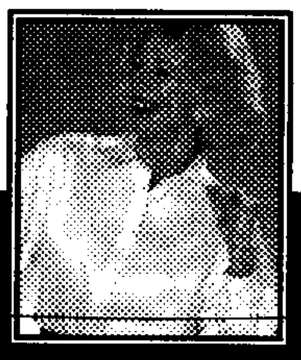

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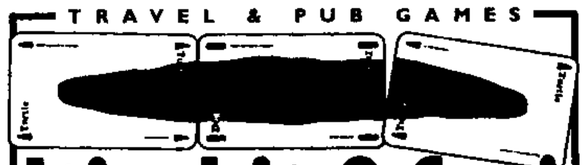

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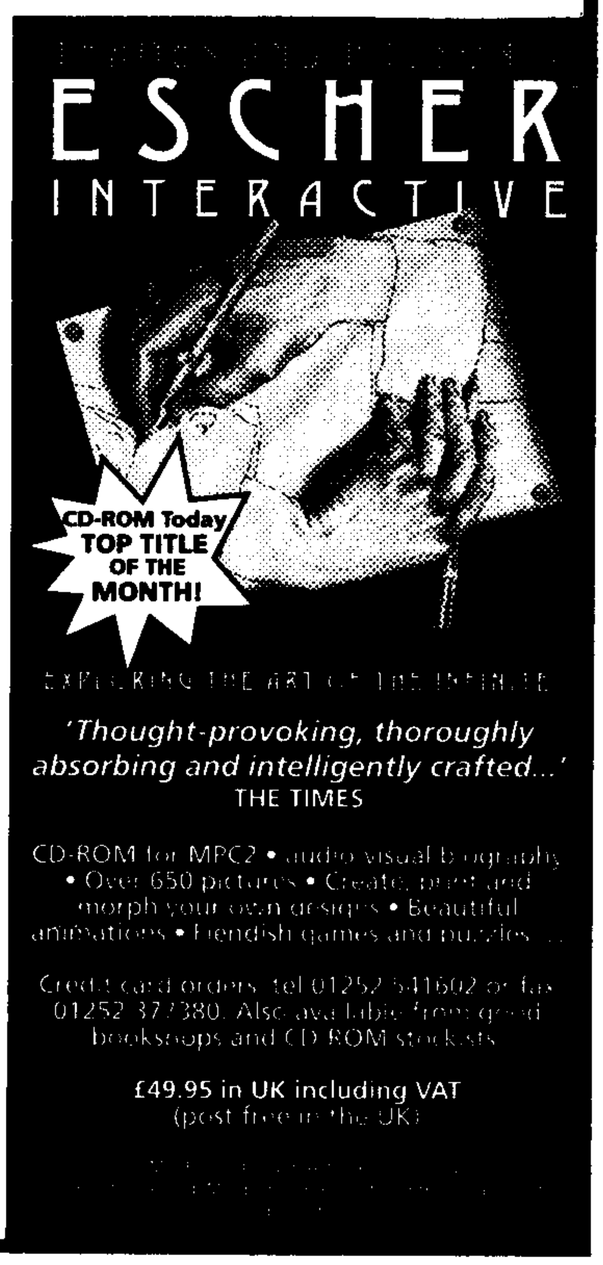
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FEMALE PROFESSIONAL graduate, 36, tall, pretty, sociable and outgoing seeks similar male soulmate for greater fulfilment in life. Solent. Box 4200.

ATTRACTIVE MALE, 36, fun loving, successful, sporty, great sense of humour, seeks Miss Wright. Photo please. Box 0999.

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INTELLIGENT, PRETTY, professional woman, 32, loves classical music, seeks compatible man. Cambs. Photo appreciated and returned. Box 1800.

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MALE GRADUATE, mid-40s, 5'8", arts-oriented, seeks congenial cultured curvaceous unattached woman for adventures, companionship and more. London. Box 2700.

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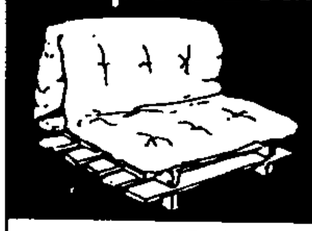

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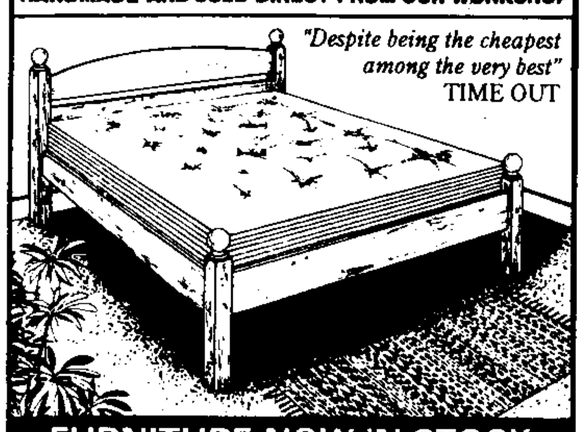

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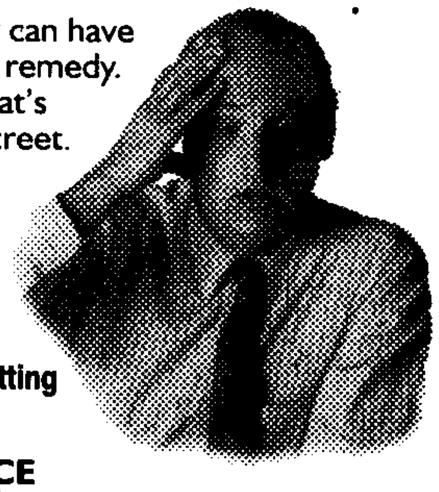

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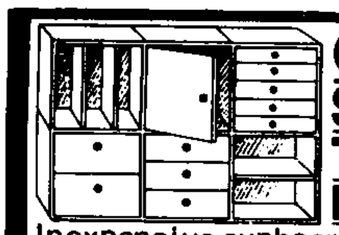

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2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age:_____ Height:_____

Occupation: _____

Religion:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
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4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
❒ Walking ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ D.I.Y. / Crafts
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Sightseeing

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max._____Don't mind ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

Dept. PE 52

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL ***or call us now on (01869) 324 100***

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